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663

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TREATISE

ON

REGENERATION.

BY

WILLIAM ANDERSON, LL.D.,
GLASGOW.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
HODDER & STOUGHTON, 27 PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCLXI.

Recd April 17, 1877.
25,431

FRATER, FRATRI.

INSCRIBED TO

THE REVEREND ALEXANDER MACLEOD,

IN TESTIMONY

OF MY ADMIRATION OF HIM AS A PREACHER,

AND ESTEEM FOR HIM AS A MAN ;

BUT ESPECIALLY,

OF MY SENSE OF THE DIVINE FAVOUR

IN HAVING GIVEN ME IN HIM,

AS A COLLEAGUE IN THE MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL,

ONE WHO BY WARM AFFECTION CONTRIBUTES

SO MUCH TO EASE THE BURDEN

OF ADVANCED YEARS.

PREFATORY NOTICE.

THE substance of the following Treatise was originally delivered in the form of Discourses from the Pulpit—a circumstance which will account for the strain of personal address and appeal by which it is characterised. The first edition was published in the year 1850, and was exhausted more than six years ago. An explanation of the delay in issuing a second may be deemed necessary, especially when some have expressed a suspicion that the author had changed his views; and others have remonstrated with him, as if he were unfaithful to the cause of truth, by withholding from dissemination principles, according to which their preaching of the Gospel had become a less perplexing duty to themselves, and greatly more interesting and profitable to their hearers. I am sure of the sympathy of those friends when they receive the mournful explanation. One, well qualified for the task, had undertaken the editing of the second edition of this work of his father, with corroborative extracts from the works of eminent divines, and annotations of his own. When making preparations, he suddenly

died. Since that event various attempts at revision have been relinquished, in consequence of the painful remembrances which were excited, as particular topics presented themselves in which he took special interest. And when at length new publishing arrangements made the task imperative, escape has been made from it as speedily as possible.

Fortunately, no change of opinion made extensive correction necessary. On the contrary, on all the more keenly disputed questions, such as the Privative nature of original sin—the simplicity of Faith as an act of the understanding, in believing God—the unscriptural and unphilosophical character of the theory of Edwards and his followers, that Regeneration *proper* consists in the communication of a *holy taste* to the mind, so as to *pre-dispose* it to believe the Word—the unnecessariness to the evidence of being regenerated, that the subject should have undergone *violent* convictions of sin, and that he should now be possessed of a personal assurance of his salvation—on these, and several other disputed questions, my convictions have been strengthened, instead of being changed; and no patience of revision could have done more than simplify, perhaps, the illustrations, and enrich them and fortify them with quotations from the works of those

who are usually referred to as *authorities* in the Church.

When the path had led through so many polemical fields, where, besides, in the exercise of the right of private judgment, I had frequently to "fight for my own hand," I was prepared, on issuing the first edition, for exception being very widely taken to my views. The disappointment was gratifying when the Treatise, as a whole, was received by the critical press with almost unanimous favour. In sending it out therefore on a second mission, I feel less anxious and more hopeful. I am too familiar with it, so as to be privy to its imperfections, to be flattered into an inordinate fancy of its worth. Yet, when from the first I was persuaded that I had received for dissemination thoughts which the Church needed, and which He who gave them would bless with a measure of success —how much more am I not warranted to cherish the persuasion in regard of this second issue, after experience of that persuasion being well founded? May He, therefore, who went forth with the book before, go forth with it again, and vouchsafe it even more abundant success!

UDDINGSTON, GLASGOW,
January 6, 1861.

CONTENTS.

PREFATORY NOTICE . . . . iii.

INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS, . . . 1

THE NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF REGENERATION, 5

THE NECESSITY OF REGENERATION, . . 38

THE INSTRUMENTALITY OF REGENERATION, . 79

THE ACTUATING AGENCY OF REGENERATION, . 116

REGENERATION, AS PRODUCED; AND, AS DEVELOPED, 166

THE PROCURING CAUSE OF REGENERATION, . 216

THE MANIFESTATION OF REGENERATION, . . 231

APPENDIX.

(B.)—PRIVATION THEORY OF ORIGINAL SIN, . 307

(C.)—THE INDIVIDUALIZING OF THE GOSPEL CALL OR OFFER, ... 311

(D.)—THE INDWELLING OF THE SPIRIT, . . 314

REGENERATION.

INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

THERE is no other doctrine, in the whole compass of our faith, so offensive to the unbeliever and formalist, and which they have assailed so virulently with their mockery and scorn, as the doctrine of Regeneration. There are to be found some with whom the doctrine of Christ's sacrificial Atonement obtains sufferance and a show of respect, who yet observe no measure in their abusive treatment of the doctrine of the renovating agency of the Holy Ghost. The natural heart has substantial reasons for making this difference: FIRST; a *partial* acknowledgment of sinfulness—such a *qualified* confession as may consist with a considerable degree of conceit and self-importance, is sufficient for a kind of belief in the propriety of the divine government being vindicated by a substitute's endurance of the penalty; especially when account is taken of the accumulated guilt of the whole world. But no such partial acknowledgments will satisfy the doctrine of Regeneration.

It demands the most prostrate and unreserved confession of a personal and thorough depravity of the heart; and this so virulent, that no power less than divine can rectify it. The doctrine of Regeneration is thus a more humiliating one than that of Atonement, and consequently more offensive to the pride of the natural man. —SECONDLY; it inculcates holiness of life with greater force. With much cogency, indeed, does the doctrine of our Lord's substitutionary Expiation of sin make its appeal on behalf of righteousness; when it pleads with the pardoned criminal, that he is not his own, but bought with a price, and bound by all ties, not only of gratitude and generosity, but of equity and justice, to live no more to himself, but for the honour of Him who died for his redemption; and who having risen again from the dead, waits on his throne for this reward of the travail of his soul. (2 Cor. v. 14.) In this case, however, the pardoned one's obedience is rather a consequent than a principal of the doctrine—rather a corollary or inference than the primary demonstration: and many there be who affect to hold by the demonstration who object to being held by the inference. On the other hand, in the case of the doctrine of Regeneration, there is no possibility of escape. The lesson of personal holiness is taught by it directly and immediately, without any circuitous deduction. Holiness is the very essence of the doctrine. We can imagine subsequent obedience separated from Atonement, but we cannot imagine it separated from Regeneration. Logically,

there is nothing inconsistent in the supposition, that after a man is pardoned he should proceed in a course of wickedness; but it is a contradiction in terms to speak of a regenerated man continuing impure and disobedient.—It is thus that the doctrine of Regeneration, through inculcating practical holiness more forcibly than the kindred one of Atonement, is more distasteful to the natural heart.—Nor is this all: I remark, THIRDLY, that the doctrine of Atonement may be entertained in some measure by a heart which has no desire for any nearness of intercourse with God. The sacrifice of Christ manifests the Deity at work only at the distance of a remote antiquity and in a foreign land; or, at nearest, as working separate from, and only by the side of, the sinner. But the doctrine of Regeneration reveals Him at work at the present day, in close contact with its object, yea, in the innermost chamber of his soul. Is it anywise surprising, that, from such a doctrine as this, the natural enmity of the heart should shrink with fear and abhorrence?

Therefore, observe, brethren, that, though it be so far well if you find your hearts entertaining with sentiments of satisfaction the doctrine of Christ's having died for the remission of sin, yet is the requisite examination far from being complete. It is comparatively an easy trial through which you have passed, and a more searching one awaits you: How are you affected by the doctrine of the Regenerating and Sanctifying operation of the Holy Ghost?—Not before you have found the state of

matters satisfactory in this, as well as in the other direction, are you warranted to pronounce on yourselves a favourable judgment.

In attempting a popular illustration of this important subject, I shall arrange my observations under the following topics; but without restraining myself, through fear of violating strict method, from casting an anticipative or retrospective glance at any object, whenever I deem it practically advantageous :—

I. The NATURE and CHARACTERISTICS of Regeneration.
II. Its NECESSITY;
III. The INSTRUMENTALITY by which it is effected;
IV. The Actuating AGENCY;
V. Its State as PRODUCED, and as DEVELOPED;
VI. Its Procuring CAUSE;
VII. Its MANIFESTATION.

This is a wide field, and every department of it is full of interest; but I shall limit my observations to the points of greatest prominence, in such a manner, that I trust the discussion will not be felt either fatiguing from its prolixity, or unsatisfactory from any important omissions.

SECTION FIRST.

THE NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF REGENERATION.

TO be regenerated, etymologically signifies to be born a second time. The expression is directly scriptural. When men presume to mock at us for our employment of it, they mock the Lord from whom we have learned it. "Except a man be born again," is one of the utterances of his divine wisdom. (John iii. 3.) Even stronger expressions than this occur in the New Testament when the same subject is referred to. It is spoken of as being a Resurrection from the dead (Ephes. ii. 1, 2), and also as being a New Creation (2 Cor. v. 17). But I shall adhere as much as possible to the idea of a New or Second Birth, that the illustration may not be confused by the introduction of a variety of images.

At the outset, I appeal, if it be not indicative of most unworthy prejudice, that men should, in the first instance, without waiting for any explanation, commence scoffing at our notion of a man being born again; and especially when they themselves make use of the expression daily with a similar reference; yea, have borrowed it from us, on account of the aptness of its

application, so as at times greatly to profane it. What phraseology, for instance, was more familiar with the infidel revolutionists of France than the Regeneration of their country? And is the idea of a regenerated *individual* an extravagant one to be sneered at, when that of a regenerated *nation* is a sober one to be treated with respect? Yea, infidel speculators will discourse of the prospects of a regenerated *world;* and yet make sport to themselves with our faith, as if it were fantastic and visionary, when we speak of the regeneration of a *single man.* How is it, that, being such masters in philosophy and politics, they know not these things? But ungodliness is ever the same—consistent in its inconsistency: resolved that it shall have its malicious laugh at the doctrines of the Gospel, accusing them of fanaticism and incredible mystery; when yet, in its own worldly systems and speculations, it employs precisely the same illustrations. But herein lie the difference and the reason: their worldly regenerations allow scope for the indulgence of many of their evil passions and lusts; whereas the Regeneration of the Gospel seeks to restrain and control them with its sanctity; and they try to laugh themselves out of its obligations; as if the laughter of men could disannul the decree of God.

I. Proceeding to explain the NATURE of Regeneration, I remark in the First Place, that according to a distinction of old theology, it is something which is not only

done *for* a man, but which is also done *upon* him. In this respect it differs from the Justification or Pardoning of the sinner, which is only something done *for* him, so as to change his *state* in the reckoning of Law; whereas Regeneration changes the man *himself*—gives him a new *character*. The distinction is valuable on account of the practical lesson which it contains. For, mark: if Regeneration is of this nature, a man must surely feel it: he must be conscious of it, one would suppose, if he have partaken of the change. Justification being only something done *for* him, he cannot feel that: it has been done for him far off in the court of Heaven; and for the knowledge of his having obtained it he is dependent on the testimony of God. It is otherwise with Regeneration. If he have attained to its blessing, the marks and signs of it will be on his person. He will have something to show which has been wrought on him—a change of form, and a change of features and complexion, for the better, which he has received under the heavenly process.

Now, brethren, though it is not logically in order that I should inquire, at this early stage of the illustration, what your evidences may be; yet I cannot forbear even now calling on each one to reflect, what may be the marks which he bears on him, and which in the hour of inquisition he would plead in support of his claim to be regarded as a recipient of the divine birth. Is each of us, who assumes to himself the christian name, possessed of such a character of holiness as no

natural temperament, no civilization, no learning nor education, no maxims of prudence nor courtesy could possibly have formed for him; and withal, so venerable, that it is not a dishonouring of God to ascribe the production of it to the agency of his Spirit?—Let this reflection be conducted with the greater care, inasmuch as we can know that we are *justified* only when we feel and discern that we are *regenerated*. We have just seen that we can learn our Justification only from the testimony of God. Well, this testimony is given only to those who are possessed of the Regenerated character. For that *Faith* which is saluted with the assurance, is at once the cause and evidence of Regeneration. It needs not then that a man should ascend to Heaven to learn if he have been Justified there: let him examine, if he have been Regenerated here on earth. The knowledge of it is near to him: it lies in his own character.*

II. I remark in the Second Place, that Regeneration being something which is done on a man's Person, it is his Mind, and not his Body, which undergoes the change. Neither is this distinction futile, nor is its illustration superfluous. For, observe, if the change is

* Hallyburton, in his Modest Inquiry, discusses the question, "Whether Regeneration have the precedency of Justification in the order of nature?" and concludes for the affirmative. This is the most direct way of vindicating the doctrine of Justification by Faith from the charge of licentiousness. It is of the essence of the doctrine that the justifying award is bestowed only on a morally renewed man.

mental, as all parties profess to believe it is, no mechanical operation on the body, one might think, can possibly effect it; and yet, such spiritual-material *dynamics*;—or to express it more definitely, spiritual *hydro-dynamics*, or *water-power*; or still more specifically, spiritual *hydraulics*,—is a first principle of the Popish science of Salvation. That Priesthood of imposture believe, at least they say they do, that by Water Baptism there is communicated to the soul of the infant the germ of spiritual life; and moreover, that there is no other mode of communicating it. The Anglican episcopacy makes precisely the same representation, as contained in their liturgy, the Book of Common Prayer; according to the forms of which every child within their church's pale is baptised; whether by a Low Church *Evangelical*, using the expressions of the prescribed formula in a non-natural sense, *i. e.*, the inverse of common sense; or by a High Church Tractarian, for once an honest man, using them in a grammatical sense.* When we reflect on this; and further, that though our own Scotland is exempt from the abuse and degradation of such public teaching, except where alien Irish, and the miserable remnant of Jacobite Prelacy wone among us, there is yet detectable among our presbyterian population an impure leaven of the superstition of water-baptism sanctification. It is to be detected fermenting even among our anti-pœdobaptist brethren, where you may find yourself treated with suspicion, if not baptised after

* See Appendix A.

their fashion.—But especially, when we reflect, that notwithstanding all the exposures which are being frequently made of the impotence of *formality*, there are so many who judge favourably of themselves, merely on account of certain places to which they walk and in which they sit down, certain postures of body which they assume, certain actions which they perform with their hands, certain eatings and libations which they perform with their mouths, and certain words which they pronounce with their tongues, it will appear how much need there is of a sustained witness-bearing for the spiritual nature of Regeneration:—that it is a work done upon the Mind, such as no mechanical or chemical operation on the body can by priestly conjuration effect; and for the want of which no bodily action can compensate.

Beside the unworthy parties just noticed, there is another interesting class whose case falls under observation here, and who claim both our sympathy and counsel. In the case of the drunkard, for example, there are two diseases on him; one of the mind, the other of the body; the one a depravation of his affections, the other a vitiation of his nerves. Now, when such a person comes to be regenerated, the process does not cure the nervous disease: the craving for the poisonous stimulant continues, for some time at least, in all its former viciousness of appetite: and when at last the nerves may be restored to a healthful tone, and the regenerated man is no longer tormented with the woe-

ful thirst, this is not the result of any healing power put forth directly by the Spirit of Regeneration on his bodily organization, but the natural physiological effect of his regenerated *mind* having resolutely adopted habits of sobriety.—So is it with all other depraved appetites and habits of sensual action and susceptibility: it is the Mind alone on which the Agency of Regeneration acts; and the mind, when changed, proceeds to reduce the rebellious flesh to order.—It has been remarked by some of the gravest divines, that Regeneration is usually productive of bodily cleanliness, and even of tidiness and neatness of apparel. And not seldom are we called to admire the manner in which some of our regenerated operatives, notwithstanding the low rate of wages and the largeness of their families, yet contrive to make their dwellings so comfortable, and shew themselves in the midst of the Sabbath's assembly so respectably attired. But who will say that all this is a constituent element of Regeneration? It is only a consequence of it—the consequence of the mind being purified, and made prudent and orderly; so that it begins to have a regard to the decency and comfort of the tabernacle in which it dwells; and institutes those habits of temperance and *economy*, the fruits of which make so fair a show. The process is similar in the correcting of perverse appetites. The mind being regenerated, according to the common principles of our constitution it controls the flesh, and superinduces habits of purity and order.

Those who have either undergone the experience themselves, or been called to deal with distressed consciences, will appreciate these remarks; though to some they may appear trifling. I have met with cases of reformed drunkards, of whose being regenerated I felt well persuaded, who were afflicted with dark and disheartening doubts of their conversion, because, although faithfully abstaining from the criminal indulgence, they continued to feel a strong desire for it.—What is the proper treatment for such persons? Is it not to ask them, in a strain of remonstrance, if they expected that the Gospel would effect a miraculous, physical cure of their diseased nerves? Let us felicitate them on the *mental* grace they have received, to maintain the controversy against the flesh; enjoin them to be thankful; and encourage them with the prospect, that, by persevering in their habits of self-denial, a rectified constitution of body also will *probably* be the consequence; when the craving will cease; and they shall no longer find the practice of righteousness to be like the striving of a battle-field: but when the body shall be assimilated in its appetites to the volitions of the imperial, victorious, regenerated mind:—*probably*, I say; which implies the possibility of the physical system being so vitiated, that there will be no cure of it in this world. But though there should not, why need the thought of it occasion any one much distress? That morbid craving of the nerves is not now your sin, but only the effect of former sin, which has been fully pardoned: and when

the regenerated mind refuses compliance, it affords the better opportunity of strengthening your graces by the conflict, so that your crown of victory shall be more glorious:—when, after having laid down in the grave that "vile body," so full of temptation, you shall receive it back from the Redeemer "fashioned like unto his glorious body,"—even in that day when, "according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself," your entire being shall be perfectly regenerated; with the body no longer an impediment and temptation, but, itself *spiritualised*, made a fit and harmonious organization for the inhabitation and exercises of the glorified mind. (2 Cor. v. 4.)

III. I remark in the Third Place, that the change of Regeneration being *mental*, it is effected, not on the faculties of the Understanding, but, on the passions and affections of the Will.—Of these two departments of mind—the powers of Knowledge, and the Passions, the latter is by far the more important; and to its rectification is the regenerative work directed. For although, as will be afterwards illustrated at large, it is through an enlightened understanding that the heart is changed; yet is this change of heart the great object ultimately contemplated; and the intellectual powers, through which the rectifying light is transmitted, remain in their former condition. If previously to his being regenerated the man's memory was unretentive, his judgment obtuse, and his imagination sluggish; now that he is

regenerated they will be found equally sluggish, obtuse, and unretentive, as the general rule.

There are intellectual phenomena, however, not seldom *consequent* on Regeneration, which have led some to imagine, that the powers of Knowledge also participated in a mysterious and almost miraculous improvement. When one, who formerly could with difficulty master the recollection of the preacher's text, shall now repeat with accuracy not only the topics of discourse, but much of their illustration; yea, when from a state of stolid imbecility, in which he never formed an opinion, such a one shall rise up and stand forth an acute argumentative pleader for the truth—appealing to such cases as these, and they are not rare, some contend, that the invigoration of the intellectual powers is immediately and directly a part of the regenerating process. But it is a mistake; for in the majority of cases the reasoning faculties do not exhibit any improvement: and the favourable instances adduced are easily explained on the principle, that the faculties were natively of a superior order, but that they lay dormant through want of an inciting passion—an incitement with which Regeneration has at length supplied them.

Similar phenomena of quickened intelligence are frequently observable when men have been animated by other passions. And if the political passion, for instance, shall in a natural way produce intellectual

improvement by its exciting power, how much less need is there of having recourse to the supposition of any supernatural influence for an account of similar improvement, under the exciting power of the spirit of Religion? "True Religion," says Foster, in his Essay on the Evils of Popular Ignorance, "besides that it is knowledge of the most important order, in whatever degree it occupies the understanding, is a marvellous improver of the *sense* of uneducated persons, by creating in them a habit of *serious* thought, which has in many instances been seen to have the effect of making them appear to have acquired in the space of a very few years, double the measure of intellectual faculty they have ever shewn." But this is far from being all. Beside the *seriousness* with which the mind applies itself to the study, so as to have its powers whetted and invigorated, there is the *grandeur* of the objects of Christian faith, with which it is impossible for the mind to be conversant without being expanded and elevated in its attempts to comprehend them. Connected with which there is the magnificent *imagery* with which the Bible invests much of its truth; so that the poorest of our people are continually enjoying the culture of the best rhetorical models. And last, though not least, there are the *spiritual ethics* of the Gospel, which, by the demand they make on a well-regulated state of thought and feeling, render the work of a man's examining himself, in order to ascertain if he be such a one as God accepts, a *metaphysical* discipline of the strictest and most sharpening nature.

There are two reasons, especially, why I feel earnest in pressing this consideration, that Regeneration contemplates only the improvement of the passions and affections, and that all phenomena of improved intellect are only natural or accidental consequents. The first and principal of these is, that the minds of some humble saints may be relieved of doubts and misgivings. Those whose province it is, as counsellors of the church, to deal with the experiences of its members, frequently meet with individuals, who, when they admire brethren that are possessed of a great faculty for quoting and applying scripture, and remembering the arguments and illustrations of books and sermons, are ready to adjudge themselves as having no part in the great reform of mind effected by Regeneration, since no such faculty has been communicated to them. The proper treatment of such persons is to assure them, that the work of Regeneration contemplates no reform in that direction; and that it may have been accomplished in them with power, though there be an absence of all such intellectual excellence as that which is exhibited by their friends. Nevertheless, I must admonish that individual who has a ready and retentive memory for ballads and witty tales, but experiences difficulty in mastering himself of the recitation of a psalm, or reporting the contents of a sermon—such a one I must admonish to make a serious examination of his case. His grounds for doubting that he has been regenerated are too good. It is because his heart finds delight in the ballads, and

none in the psalm, that his memory experiences such a difference in the tasks.

The other reason which induces me to insist so earnestly on the illustration of this point is, that it contains the refutation of an infidel objection, or rather, the repelling of an infidel sneer. They will refer to some of our brethren of slender intellect, and rude and ungrammatical speech, and tauntingly ask us, if these be our men of whom we believe that the Spirit of God has been operating on their minds! Yes, sirs, they are: and it is because your own philosophy is so rude, —miscalculating wherein the greatness of man consists, that you are incapable of appreciating their worth. They have acquired a moral refinement, a sensibility of conscience, an integrity of principle, a purity and warmth of affection, an elevation of hope and aim, and withal, views of the paternal character of God and of the rectitude of his government, before which, if you had any discernment of true excellence, you would appear abashed and confounded, acknowledging, that these unlearned and unpolished men possessed a dignity and nobility of character infinitely transcending your own. And the time of their complete triumph draws near, when, intellectually also, they shall gain the superiority. In that Kingdom of Light for which they are destined, with faculties enlarged and invigorated, they will pursue their studies, when to study will be worth while. What make *you* of it at present? With all your contempt of the ignorance of others, what have

you learned, and what is its value? How naught it is!—Now is the appointed time for *morals;* then will be the time for *knowledge.* This is the order of acquirements which the christian has wisely chosen. The morals now secure him advantageous circumstances for study, "when that which is perfect is come;" whereas for you, unless you betimes repent, it will be a condition of deepened obscurity—"wandering stars" as ye be, "to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."

IV. Proceeding with the main illustration, I remark in the Fourth Place, that, when the regenerative influence affects the passions and sentiments, the older divines were accustomed to represent the change produced as being one, not of the *substance* of the heart, but only of its *qualities.* This is in some respects well distinguished, but in others it wants definiteness; and, taking advantage of a physiological illustration, I explain, that it does not consist in any *organic* change, in respect of the extinction or addition of any passion or power; but entirely in a *functional* change, in respect of the *direction* of the powers, so that their emotions are expended on different objects from those to which they were formerly directed. Some of these expressions will be found, I suspect, unintelligible by many; but the following illustration will simplify the matter for all capacities.

First, then, no old power or susceptibility of the heart is suppressed or extinguished. Supposing that

desire and aversion, joy and grief, love and anger, hope and fear—these eight, were a full enumeration of the passions by which a man was actuated before he was regenerated, he is found to be still possessed of all the eight, after he has undergone the change. It is not as if anger, for instance, were no longer characteristic of him. It remains within him in all its burning, animating power. It is only turned away from one class of objects and directed against another.—What ignorance some persons exhibit who conceive of anger and censure it, as if it were incompatible with a regenerated state! Was Christ never angry? And is not He the model after which the Spirit who dwelt in Him regenerates his disciples? What would become of the world—what, of the church, but for anger? If such a one there be as a man who is destitute of it he must be very useless, and I am sure, unregenerated: for the Spirit of Holiness produces no such deformed and mutilated births. The only question is, against what objects is the anger *directed?* Are they always such as deserve it; and never such as rather merit love?

Secondly, no new passion is superadded. This circumstance demands even more attention than is requisite for the preceding one. Much perplexity and anxiety of mind, and not a little fanaticism, have been the consequence of its neglect. Observe, therefore, that there is nothing in the case such as the communication of a new faculty, by which a man mystically discerns and loves divine and heavenly objects; nor even the

awakening of some old faculty which had lain dormant. He does not need this. The former instrumentality which was in daily exercise is sufficient for the end. That power of the heart with which he formerly loved man is quite adequate to the exercise of loving God, when thitherward directed. Accordingly the Apostle thus expresses himself, "The Lord *direct your hearts* into the love of God!" (2 Thess. iii. 5.)—Generally: just as the Apostacy of man produced no constitutional change in him, in respect of withdrawing any original susceptibility of passion, or adding any one new; so, Regeneration proceeds with the heart as it finds it, only giving its energies a different determination.

Under another topic I shall treat of the Manifestation of Regeneration, with the view of supplying tests by which inquirers may try themselves, whether they have been the subjects of it. But here also I must advert to part of that Manifestation, with the view of illustrating the Nature of the change: and for the sake of simplicity I shall limit the illustration to the change produced on the passions of Love and Anger.

There are three aspects under which this change presents itself. *First;* when a man is regenerated he will in many instances continue to love objects which he loved before, but, with a *change of reasons* for loving them. If they presented themselves with none but their former qualities they might cease to have any power of attraction for him; but appearing, as they do,

in the light of other interests, they retain hold of his heart. It will be seen, on a little reflection, that, even in this case, the description given of Regeneration is correct, when it is represented as consisting in a change of the Direction of the affections: for morally it is the same, that a man turn to love a new object, and that he continue to love the old one, but for new reasons.—Let two exemplifications suffice; the one, the love of a person, the other, the love of an inanimate object.—When unregenerated, the man loved the memory of John Bunyan for his genius, his wit and humour, his sagacity, his patriotic zeal and his genial philanthropy. Having undergone the saving change, he loves his memory still; but it is now especially on account of his piety, and the help he affords him for prosecuting his heaven-ward pilgrimage.—Again, when unregenerated, he loved gold; loved it for its ministry to his luxury and pride. Being regenerated, he loves it still; but now, because it helps him to honour his Master, to support and extend his church, to relieve the distress of his afflicted saints, and to make his own heavenly reward—that reward of *grace*—more glorious, through the sanctified use which he makes of that which was once the mammon of unrighteousness.

Although the same objects continue to excite the love, yet, since they are loved for new reasons, we may calculate, that, in the greater number of cases, at least, there will be a considerable difference in respect of the *degree* of ardour. In some there will be an increase;

in others a diminution. Referring to the two preceding exemplifications:—John Bunyan will be admired and loved more than formerly, even irrespectively of the original admiration of his genius being perpetuated: and the gold will be loved more or less, according to the comparative strength of the previous worldliness and the subsequent grace. If the extinguished covetousness were moderate, and the acquired charity be ardent, the man will now toil for money more eagerly than ever; so as possibly to be accused by the undiscerning of having become avaricious, under his professed religious change. (Ephes. iv. 28.) It is principally in the case of the love of *offspring*, that we discover instances in which the passion appears to be of equal strength before and after regeneration. In the unregenerated state, these children nearly engrossed the whole of the love of the idolizing mother's heart. Now that she is regenerated, other and better objects, it is true, share her affections. But the intensity and tenderness with which a matron in Israel loves her children, when she contemplates them under the new aspect of "lambs of the Redeemer," more than compensate for the manner in which those other objects divide her attention. A part of the love of the regenerated heart is not only purer but stronger than the whole of the love of the unregenerated one: for Regeneration, in changing the direction of the love, and presenting it with greater objects, expands it, and enlarges its capacity for loving; so that it can

afford to love friends as warmly as the heart of the worldling loves them, while it loves God, and all the saints, and all mankind besides.

Secondly; a regenerated mind will in some cases entirely forsake former objects of affection, and expend itself on others about which it was once careless: not perhaps that it is disgusted with those former objects, or bears them any ill-will; but because the other, with their newly-discovered and surpassing loveliness and worth, engross the heart and leave no room for aught beside.—When unregenerated, the man, as a scholar, admired the Father of Greek poetry with a kind of idolatry: now that he is regenerated, it would not be inconsistent with his christian profession that he should continue his admiration, in part at least, in that direction: but he is so engrossed with Paul the Apostle, that he has neither time nor feelings to spare for Homer the Poet.—In like manner he may withdraw from the association of former cherished companions of a worldly spirit; not because he despises or abhors them,—for they may be morally decent and amiable,—but because there is more attraction for him in the fellowship of the saints.

Thirdly; the regenerated mind will in many cases regard objects with feelings directly the opposite to those with which it regarded them in its state of nature —now loving that which it once hated, and hating and abhorring that which it once admired and loved; so as to present the interesting spectacle of Love and Anger making an interchange of objects.—With what zest he

once revelled amid the obsceneness, and saint-hatred and blasphemy of Burns; and what nausea he felt at a hymn of Doddridge, singing of the sweetness of the Name of Jesus! Behold how all things have changed into contraries! The anger has turned away from Doddridge and assails the sensual heathen; and the love has deserted Burns, and lavishes its affections on the Christ-loving saint.—The members of that infidel club were once to him the most excellent of the earth: he anticipated the night of meeting with the delight with which the lover anticipates the interview with his mistress. And what of his psalm-singing neighbour, with his family prayers? There is no enmity so deadly as that with which an infidel's heart regards a holy man. It is the most genuinely hell-born. It was this kind of enmity which produced the first murder. Yet, behold, again, how under the regenerating stroke the poles of the heart have changed! With what abhorrence, only pity qualifying, does he now regard that profane and licentious band! whilst in admiration of the once-hated psalm-singer, he is away to make him humble confessions, and implore that he give him a brother's place in his heart for his counsel and sympathy.

Having explained the Nature of Regeneration, considered generally as a metaphysical or psychological phenomenon, before proceeding to the illustration of another department of our topic, I shall interpose a few practical reflections and interrogations.

First, then, observe, that so far as the Nature of Regeneration is concerned there is no mystery in the subject. It is comprehensible with the clearest distinctness. Viewing it in its most striking aspect as being such a change of mind, that the subject of it now loves what he once hated, and hates what he once loved, it is nothing different from what we every day see exemplified by worldly men. And when we find them expressing themselves this morning in terms of admiration respecting certain political characters, for example, whom we found them denouncing bitterly last night,—where is their sense of either reason or justice, when they mock at us as being visionary and fanatic, when we teach, that, in the course of the short time, and less, from when the Sabbath congregation assembles till it is dismissed, a man shall be so regenerated, that, from being the rude blasphemer he was when he entered, he shall retire a reverent worshipper of God? Instead of there being any thing wonderful in this, does not all the mystery rather lie in the depravity of man being so virulent, that there are so few saving changes which we have an opportunity to record?—Although there *were* mystery in the nature of the change;—although it consisted, for instance, in the superaddition of some new faculty to the constitution, the mysteriousness of such a fact would not be a sufficient objection to the doctrine of it: but there are mysteries enough in our faith, without any one should make gratuitous and superstitious additions to them: and it is of no slight advantage, that the

grounds of infidel objection be circumscribed within the proper scriptural limits. I therefore repeat, that there is nothing more mysterious in the *Nature* of Regeneration, than in such changes in the objects of their affections as unbelievers themselves frequently experience and exhibit in common life.

And when I thus repel the infidel objection, I equally protest against a mystical theology which has a tendency to put men on the search, when examining themselves of their spiritual condition, for something mysteriously new imparted to the heart. The consequence is either fanaticism or disheartening perplexity. If regenerated, you will feel nothing new beyond what you can clearly comprehend, viz., that whereas you once regarded God, and his Son, and his Spirit, and his Saints, and his Book, and his Heaven, with aversion and despite, you now regard them with reverence, with love, and ardent desire. There may be mystery—I shall afterwards exert myself to prove that there is deep and unfathomable mystery—in the Agency by which the change is produced; but mystery there is none in the nature of the change itself. It is the old love of the old heart with which it loved things earthly, *newly directed* to the loving of things divine and heavenly. The difference is indeed great, but it is nothing more than this; and the nature of it is of the easiest comprehension.

Secondly; I inquire if you entertain with satisfaction the idea of Regeneration as it has been described;

and *first* generally, as being an improvement of *mind.* How many indicate by their vain behaviour, that it would have been for them a Gospel much worthier of acceptation had it proposed to tincture their countenances with a fairer complexion, and remodel their persons with a more graceful shape. Such people are insensible to the charms of *mental* beauty; and wonder what men can mean by such an application of the term: yea, they feel towards their own minds as if they were strangers and aliens to them, to be called on to concern themselves with whose interests they treat as a troublesome and unreasonable demand on their charity!—On their own principles, when all their respect is towards corporeal beauty, how ignorantly they calculate! How have you yet to learn, silly one! what every one else understands, that if you would *look* well, you must *think* well;—that, unless a beautiful mind radiate its influence from within, no iris-hue of eye, no bloom of complexion, no symmetry of features, will, after the second glance, sustain the fascination of beauty; and also, that without the mental inspiration, no *statuesqueness* of form and gesture can ensure grace and dignity of mien.—But this is a kind of trifling with the subject: Know then, that, according to the mind, shall the body in *Eternity* be. Resurrection is decreed no less for the unjust than for the just: and think how hideous must be the body assigned to a spirit that is damned! Yea, independently of the retributive assignment of the divine justice, what black-

ness, what distortion of despair, making you a horror to all your present flatterers, shall be the necessary consequence of the wo of your condemned, unsanctified mind! Call it not a rude and vulgar alarm. What less of misery is your prospect, if there be any immortality at all? Try a description of it for yourself: Say, "here is my despite of God, and let me calculate its adequate punishment." What less than a countenance haggard with remorse and despair does your own calculation prognosticate?—And that no argument for your repentance may be omitted: See how the regenerated mind of her who on earth was treated with such slight and contempt by yourself and other vain creatures like you, on account of her marred countenance and ungainly form, has secured for her the reinvestment of that same body, it is true, but "raised in glory" after having been "sown in dishonour," being "fashioned like unto the glorious body" of her Lord, whose "countenance is as the sun when it shineth in its strength."—As being one then who is so concerned about being beautiful, the appeal lies to both your fear and emulation, that a regenerated mind be the object of your most earnest desire and active pursuit.

Though the foregoing remarks, made for the rebuke of those who have no regard to Mind at all, evidently proceed on the principle, that mental beauty consists in well-ordered Affections; yet a few sentences, still more explicit on this subject, are needful for another class who would resent being associated with that ignoble

number, but who are little less properly the subjects of remonstrance and exposure.—Observe, therefore, *secondly*, that this party would, like their neighbours, have accounted it a Gospel worthier of acceptation, if it had proffered them a regeneration of *intellect*, under which they would have acquired more wit, ingenuity and learning; instead of piety, gentleness and goodness. The calculation which these persons make of the greatness and beauty of man excels but slightly that of the sensual class whom they affect to despise. It is a rude mechanical reckoning which places greatness in such properties. In the estimation of all who think soundly, —as much as the intellectual faculties transcend in importance the animal powers, are they in their turn transcended by the passions. The measure of a man is his morality, not his learning. Be the world's measurement what it may, this is the measurement of the Great Judge, who, according to the manner in which men come up to it, or fall short of it, will in eternity reward or punish them. How much need many have, in order to their being convinced of their depravedness, to be tried with the question: Were you offered the choice of being made intellectually expert or morally good, which would you prefer? Or, as parents, Whether would you have your child distinguished for his cleverness, though he should be self-willed and proud; or, for truthfulness and kindness of disposition, though neighbours should report him dull and spiritless? It is one of the best of tests

for the determination of a man's principles, to examine him of the kind of *fortune* which he desires for his child. Do *you* covet for *yours* the fortune of a heart replenished with good affections? Then, happy parent and happy child together!

In the course of explaining the NATURE of Regeneration generally, as a phenomenon of mental affection, frequent references have necessarily been made to its CHARACTERISTICS. But something more specific, and which will combine all into one view, is requisite: though, both in consequence of these anticipative references, and of the subject being one which is popularly well understood, the illustration will be made with brevity.

(1.) The primary characteristic of Regeneration is a change of heart from a state of carelessness about God, or slavish fear of Him, or enmity against Him: of despite to his Person and his government, to his law and his love, to his promises and his threatenings, to his family, and to his inheritance—*into* a state of filial reverence, confidence, and obedience:—of admiration of Him, as being of all who are called great the most excellent; of gratitude towards Him, as being of all benefactors the most bountiful; of dependence on Him, as being of all friends the most tender, faithful, and powerful; and of loyalty towards Him, as being of all

Sovereigns, the most rightful, glorious, and gracious:—As being One in the contemplation of whom the soul finds all its demands of perfection answered, and in whom it reposes satisfied with the vision; whose favour it seeks after and enjoys as the chief good; to serve whom it regards its highest honour; to advance the interests of whose kingdom engages its warmest patriotism; in whose family it finds its most endeared kindred; and whose house is its longed-for home.—Have *you* any understanding of this? From experience of such a state of feelings in any degree, is it easily comprehensible for you how a heart may be possessed by them to overflowing?

(2.) It is a change from a state of mind in which the Name of Jesus was wearied of, or despised, or resented and maligned—*into* a state, in which, in union with that of the Eternal Father, it receives a place "above every name" as the most honoured for its excellence, the most endeared for its love, and the most loyally reverenced for the legitimacy of its claims.

> To me that bleeding love of his
> Shall ever precious be:
> Whatever He to others is
> He's All in All to me.

Such was the song of Isaac Watts: and all the regenerated unite in the singing of it. The degrees of fervour are, no doubt, different, but all sing with emotion. Do *you?* Or do you refuse to unite in the chorus, under the charge that it is effeminate senti-

mentalism? You are on your trial, whether or not you have passed from death into life.

(3.) It is a change from a state of mind in which the name of the Holy Ghost did not obtain the acknowledgment of even a superstitious sentiment of fear—*into* a state in which it is cherished, in union with the names of Father and Son, as that of the most sympathetic and familiar Comforter, the most faithful Counsellor, and the most skilled, eloquent, and ardent Advocate of the soul:—Yea as the great Physician for the body, too—in sustaining its life in the present world and reviving it after death in the Resurrection (Rom. viii. 2). How many, even of those whom He has regenerated by his wonder-working power, and within whose bosoms He dwells as the Promoter of all their sanctity and the Communicator of all their Comforts, underrate, yea, *ignore* the *fellowship* of the Holy Ghost. So extensive is the evil, that I shrink from making the common personal appeal, as a test of Regeneration, Do *you* delight in the thought of that fellowship?

(4.) It is a change from a state in which the gratification of the flesh, or the avoidance of its pains; occupied all the meditations, desires, contrivances, and exertions; or in which, at the best, the gratification and adorning of the intellect shared the attention and efforts—*into* a state of sensibility to moral excellence—of a capacity to appreciate the internal beauty of a devotional, pure, and charitable spirit—of a self-loathing on account of being defiled and deformed by the oppo-

site qualities—of an earnest, prayerful exertion and self-discipline for their acquisition—and a felicitation of self as having made a conquest of great gain, when divine grace has vouchsafed the communication of them.—Again I inquire, if *you* can comprehend how a mind may be concerned about such profits, and be ambitious of being so adorned?

(5.) It is a change from a state in which this world, with its animal pleasures, its friends, its offspring, its literature and science and pictures and songs, its amusements, its wealth, its praise and honour and power were pursued or enjoyed as a sufficient portion—*into* a state in which Eternity is a name of at once the greatest fear and the greatest hope—of fear, for the wo of its Hell—of hope, for the bliss of its Heaven.—Have *your* passions undergone this change? Would there be nothing ludicrous in a friend speaking of you as being a *heavenly-minded* man? Otherwise, how can you delude yourself with the fancy that, *after all*, you *possibly* may have been born again, so as to be qualified for admission into that Kingdom of Glory?

(6.) It is a change from a state of enmity against man—of hatred, of revenge, of envy, of carelessness about his welfare, of an engrossing selfishness which has no regard to any advantage beyond the circle of its own family at farthest—oftentimes, not so far—*into* a state of sympathetic, congratulatory, helpful, open-armed and open-handed far-reaching charity.—This Benevolence of a regenerated mind is distinguished by the following

properties from that which the natural heart sometimes exhibits:—first, by its taking interest in men considered as God's children, to be loved for their Father's sake; second, as a consequence of the foregoing, by its universality—its all-comprehensive philanthropy; third, by its concern for men's spiritual and eternal, as well as bodily and temporal advantages; and fourth, by its special respect to the members of the household of faith; both because they are dearer to God than his other children, which is a reason why *it* also prefers them; and because it finds in them better objects of complacent regard, and more fraternal sympathy and co-operation in its sentiments and pursuits.—It is unnecessary to explain more particularly how in all these respects the benevolence of a regenerated mind differs from and excels that of the natural mind, howsoever constitutionally disinterested: the distinction is obvious. The question, therefore, returns: From experience have *you* any understanding of a charity so peculiar?

(7.) It is a change from a state of mind in which the Church, unless it might be some self-denominated section of it, in which interest was taken from mercenary, bigotted, or political motives, as when at their *symposia*, the most infidel and profligate shall be the most furious in *toasting* "Church and King," and the more furiously, and with bacchanalian cups more cleanly drained, in proportion to their hatred of the true church, —*into* a state in which the holy Catholic church, constituted of believers in Christ, and actuated by his Spirit—

of whatever country, colour, or denomination—is regarded as being the noblest of all kingdoms; that which engages its warmest patriotism for its defence, cherishing, and extension; that in which it finds its most endeared fellow-citizenship; and that for the ascendancy of which, above all the other institutions of this earth, it waits with prayerful expectancy.—Alas! again. How many professors underrate the prerogatives of the Church! and in accommodation to the prevailing weakness of faith and strength of worldliness, I must, another time, shape the testing question in a mitigated form, lest I exclude many who may possibly be accepted of the Judge: Have *you* any sentiment worthy of the name of Patriotism for the Church, as constituted of all of whatever country, class, colour, or denomination, who, by a holy and charitable life, evince the sincerity of their profession of faith in Jesus Christ, as having died in their room, for the expiation of their sins? All such, *I*, for one, hail as fellow-citizens. Do *you?* If not, I question your pretensions to the regenerated character. I do not understand how they can be genuine.

(8.) Finally; as the secret of all the other changes, it is a change of mind from a state in which the Bible was felt, at best, or rather, in the least degree of evil, the most tiresome of books—*into* a state in which it is prized as being *the* book—indeed—the Book of Life.—Because, as will presently be more amply illustrated, that Book contains *the truth*, which is the *seed* of Regeneration, impregnating the soul with its divine

principles. Any notion of Regeneration, without such an impregnation of Bible truth, so as to create a constitutional appetite for that truth, is as preposterous as the fancy of a child being careless about its mother's milk. The prescription stands thus: "as new-born babes, desire *ye* the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." *Sincere* milk, observe; that is, *genuine:* not an imposition of chalk and water, in its name; nor an adulteration and drugging of it with saccarine, and alcoholic, and opiate, as well as with wormwood and gall, and arsenical admixtures. How many quacks there be, setting themselves forth as ministers of the word, who endeavour to practise on the people all the sorts of imposition and adulteration! What is the people's resource for protection? The personal study, I answer, of "the Word which is nigh" them—as nigh, in these favoured lands, at least, to themselves as to these ministers.* Nevertheless, so persuaded am I of the helpfulness of the Pastorate of the Church to faith in the Word, that I question the claims to the character of being regenerated, made by any man who slights it, when approved by the voice of an approved church, either in respect of an oral preaching of the word, or exhibition of its truth by sacraments; or an administration of that truth by *discipline*, whether by the moderator of a session, or the president of a congregation, or a bishop—There is more: I am disposed to question the claims of him,

* See Discourses, Second Series, Rom. x. 8.

who, amid all his reading, feels no interest and finds no pleasure in the reading of Religious Books. There are many books called religious, and truly enough so denominated, which I would feel it to be a heavy penance to be condemned to read; but there is also a great multitude, from which to make a selection, which a mind of the highest culture in literature will peruse with eagerness, provided it be regenerated, on account of the help which they afford to the understanding of the Book of Life. Are *you* of such a character, that your friend visiting you on a week-day would not be surprised, from what he knows of you, to find you engaged with the Commentary of Matthew Henry?—I have done for a time with the application of such tests. An opportunity will present itself for renewing the process, under another topic of the Illustration.

SECTION SECOND.

THE NECESSITY OF REGENERATION.

IT scarcely needs to be explained, that, by the Necessity of Regeneration, which now falls under discussion, no absolute obligation either for its bestowment or reception is meant; but only, a relative indispensableness in order to admission into the kingdom of Heaven, and consequently, escape from the kingdom of Darkness. For, since there are only two destinations in eternity, exclusion from the one kingdom infers inclusion into the other. If, then, when importuned by the mercies of God, men remain obstinate, through insensibility to their value,—let them at least, be persuaded by his terrors. Who that believes the testimony to be sincere can be insensible to the threatening of that "outer darkness"—out from the universe, where there is neither sun nor star? When a heaven of holiness fails to charm you, call to your aid a meditation on that region of midnight blackness, that your heart may be induced to seek for that regeneration of itself, without which escape from the wo is impossible—equally impossible as "to see the

Lord." As I proceed, then, with the illustration of the latter impossibility, remember the dreadful alternative. To miss the one kingdom, is to be made captive of the other.

Observe farther, in explanation of the general principle, that the Necessity does not lie in a regenerated character being the *meritorious* cause or condition of gaining the heavenly inheritance; but only the condition of *qualification* for admission into it. The distinction is at once obvious and important. It is the key to much of the doctrine of the Gospel: and our older divines made great use of it. The work of a servant is the meritorious condition of his hire; whereas the humble heart, giving assurance of his future loyalty, is the qualifying condition of the rebel being pardoned, when the king's Son intercedes for him. In like manner, the intercession of Christ, proceeding on the ground of his substitutionary work is the *procuring cause* of a man's admission into the heavenly kingdom, and his personal regeneration is the *qualifying cause.* Now, observe, that though the qualifying cause may not be so *important* as the procuring one, it is every whit as *necessary.* The rebel's own humility is as imperatively a condition of his pardon—a *sine qua non,* as Robert Hall explains it—as is the intercession of the Prince. So that regeneration, in its character of a condition of qualification, is as indispensable as if it had borne the character of a condition of merit. This is now the subject which presents itself for illustration.

I. I shall argue afterwards, that the necessary holiness is attainable only through a change from a state of depravity; but, in the first instance, let us consider simply the necessity of its being produced on trial as a qualification for the heavenly inheritance, in whatever manner it may have been originated.

Observe, then, in the FIRST PLACE, its necessity in respect of other interests besides those of the candidate for the kingdom himself. (1.) It is necessary in respect of the divine complacency. For any one to be admitted into that kingdom is to be introduced into the immediate presence of God—to be constituted one of his courtiers—and to hold familiar intercourse with Him, as a son with a father. To be qualified for this, it is not sufficient that Law have made no complaint against him, or have ceased from urging it, in consequence of having obtained satisfaction. The question here is not about the Judge's acquittal of the accused, and dismissing him absolved from the bar; but about taking him home to his house, and communing with him as a chosen friend—an end which no imputed obedience of a Mediator, *active*, any more than *passive*, as theologians distinguish, can possibly serve. The man must be personally of pure character, so as to be an object not only presenting nothing offensive to the eyes of the divine holiness, but one whom it contemplates with delight. "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle—who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart. For thou art

not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight."—(2.) Besides this necessity, that those who stand in the presence of God be of such character that He find complacent delight in them—the honour of his Court is concerned, in all impurity, meanness, and unworthiness of whatever complexion being excluded from it; and in nothing being admitted and entertained in it which is not fair, amiable and honourable. The character of his courtiers is always assumed, and justly, as an index of the character of the king himself; and the character of the King of Heaven must be protected with peculiar sacredness. "Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever: and there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie."—(3.) There is yet more: regard must be shewn to the feelings, the honour, and the advantage of the angels and saints—so that they be not only protected from an offensive and degrading companionship; but associated with such persons as their fellow-courtiers, who through their sympathy and intercommunion, will cherish their devotion and enhance their enjoyment.—How vain then is it for any man to speak of his confidence in the justifying power of Christ's death, and the merit-giving power of his active obedience, unless that confidence be of such an influential nature as to produce a personal holiness "without which no man shall see the Lord;" for only "the pure in heart" shall be admitted to the beatific vision.

Observe now, in the SECOND PLACE, the necessity of the holiness in respect of the interests of the candidate for the kingdom himself; not only that he may have a capacity for enjoying its pleasures, and an aptitude for its peculiar exercises, but that he may not experience them to be positively burdensome and painful. Devout men are wont to express themselves very strongly on this subject. Dr. Doddridge, for instance, one of the mildest of divines though he was, addresses the unregenerated in the following terms: "You think heaven is so lovely and so glorious a place, that, if you could possibly get an admittance thither, you should certainly be happy. But I would now set myself, if possible, to convince you, that this is a rash and ill-grounded persuasion; and that, on the contrary, if you were now in the regions of glory, and in the society of those blessed inhabitants, that unrenewed and unsanctified heart of yours, would give you a disrelish for all the sublimest entertainments of that blissful place, and turn heaven itself into a kind of hell to you."

A very cursory reflection on the characteristics of the heavenly kingdom will shew the propriety of these remarks.—Consider, *First*, Who is the King that reigns there, and into whose presence the subjects are immediately introduced: It is the Holy One, in the open manifestation of the glory of his majesty! Irrespectively of any fear which an unsanctified heart might feel of being consumed by the flaming forth of his indignation—would not the sense of being offensive

to Him, the restraint of his presence, and the continual presentation to its sight of an object so repulsive as the image of God must ever be to an unholy mind—would not all this be enough to render heaven so truly a place of torment, that Dr. Doddridge does not appear to have expressed himself with the smallest exaggeration?—When there are so many to whom the simple *name* of God when mentioned reverently—the faintest notion of Him excited in the mind—is so irksome, yea, so hateful, how could they endure the disclosure of his countenance, and dwelling continually under the revelation of his presence?—Even the most cultivated among the saints, perhaps,—cultivated by meditation, and prayerful communion with Him—will confess that they have need of further improvement, before the prospect of a *lifetime* of such a state be one of delight, and not merely of acquiescence. Yet, let there be no mistake; *all* saints enjoy the prospect *in some degree.* Brethren, how feel *you* in regard of it? Is so much as an *occasional* enjoyment of the beatific vision a favourite and cherished expectation for your longing hearts—longing to see their Father? "As for me," said David, "I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."—I might in like manner argue the necessity of holiness as a qualifying condition for the enjoyment of the kingdom, from the manner in which CHRIST shall be revealed and preside there. The illustration, however, would be almost identical: and I shall only remark additionally,

that any diminution of *fear* which may be occasioned by the idea of the revelation of "the Lamb," when compared with that occasioned by the idea of the revelation of "Him that sitteth upon the throne," is more than compensated for by the *despite* with which an unsanctified heart treats the imagination of the companionship and presidency of Jesus of Nazareth.

Consider, *Secondly*, what shall be the Exercises and Employments of the kingdom. Of a multitude which might be enumerated, I select for especial notice only two. The FIRST is its adoring *Praise*. This shall be eminently characteristic alike of the duties and pleasures of the state of glory. Besides the regular, stated, and more formal ceremonial of the celestial temple, when the united song of the redeemed shall be like the chorus of the ocean—beside this—as the saints individually or in separate groups contemplate the revealed glory of God's person—as in the course of their study of his works they make new discoveries of his excellences—as in the evolutions of his Providence they witness his mighty acts—and as they receive new favours in showers of blessing from his throne, they shall ever and anon break forth into exclamations and songs of gratitude and praise. "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, they will be still praising Thee: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!"—Now, when there are some who neither pray nor sing praise at all; and others, who when they occasionally engage in the exercises, feel

them so irksome; when some never sanctify the Sabbath in any form; and others when at times they enter the house of prayer feel it to be a painful imprisonment—to all such, even *one week* of an eternity "where congregations ne'er break up, and Sabbaths have no end," would appear an interminable and odious servitude.

Nevertheless, there is danger here of a misapprehension which is at once injurious to the credit of the kingdom, and calculated to mar the hope of the saints. —I question if there is any one, who, were he honestly to speak his mind, would not acknowledge that the representation, as frequently made in a declamatory way, of the devotional exercises of the heavenly state, so as to make eternity a perpetual Sabbath, does not excite in him any lively expectation, but rather an apprehension of monotonous ennui. I therefore remark, that, admitting that the heavenly state is properly characterized when it is spoken of as a Sabbatism—the notion of a Sabbath is not engrossed by contemplation and exercises of direct devotion. The Creator's own Sabbath, the model of ours, was one of activity. When He rested from his work of making the world, He sat down on his throne to *reign* over it. The like may be said of the Redeemer's Sabbath. And not less shall the saints, when they have entered into their Sabbath of glory, be largely engaged in *reigning* also. This is accordingly the SECOND characteristic of their employment which I proposed to notice, for convicting the

unregenerate of their incapacity for the heavenly state.

Those who have heretofore satisfied themselves—strange that any one should be satisfied so easily!—with such information on the subject of the saints' inheritance, as is afforded by popular sermons and catechisms made for little children, will be astonished, I am persuaded, when they examine the Testator's own Deed to discover how large a portion of the bequeathment consists in being advanced *to power*. I note for reference only a few of the multitude of passages:—Matt. xxv. 21; Luke xix. 17; 1 Cor. vi. 2; Rev. iii. 21; Rev. ii. 26. What shall be the precise nature of this promised Government; and what shall be all the particulars of the administration, I do not profess to be able to explain; and even the little I understand, the present is not a fit opportunity for illustrating. It is enough that I declare my belief to be, that it will be no mock-royalty—no mere figure of it—but a true and substantial administration of power for the control and regulation of others.—Some one may unreflectingly say, that, so far at least as the desire to rule is concerned, there are persons enow possessed of this qualification for the kingdom. How unreflectingly, indeed! There is no character so rare as that of being ambitious after this sort. Reflect, it is to reign with *Christ*, and under Him, and for Him, and by his methods. There are men, eaten up with the lust of power, who, rather than wear such a crown and occupy such a throne, would be

bound hand and foot in fetters of iron, and cast into a dungeon.—And there are not a few professors who had need consider seriously, if, as contradistinguished from a common-place, vulgar correctness and propriety of morals, they be in the course of acquiring that princely magnanimity and generosity of character which will qualify them for their destiny, as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, to reign with Him in his kingdom.

Consider, *thirdly*, what shall be the Company in the kingdom.—Part of its felicity is represented as consisting in sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and consequently with all the saints who have appeared since the time of righteous Abel, and who will yet appear until the consummation—to converse with them on the subjects in which they feel interested—to sing with them the songs in which they delight—and to co-operate with them in the work in which they engage. —Bethink yourself of the qualification requisite for *that!* There was formerly a question, about the saints' endurance of you; the question is now, about your endurance of them. When some feel it so painful should they be accidentally confined for an hour, even, to the company of men so partially sanctified as are the saints on this earth—relishing nothing and nauseating every thing that is said, and making their escape as soon as practicable, as from an atmosphere in which they are like to be suffocated—what an eternity of misery would not an eternity be to them of the society of "the just made perfect!"

Illustration such as the foregoing might be pursued at great length; but enough has been done to demonstrate, that any system which deals lightly with personal holiness, and does not assign it a place of the very highest importance—as high as that of the sinner's justification—is simply a system of absurdity.—When Socinianism pleads for man's salvation by repentance and good works, though it violates the Scripture, it does not violate common sense. But the pretended orthodoxy, which engrosses its system with demonstrations of the doctrine of atonement, either in neglect of personal righteousness, or through fear of a spirit of legalism, indicates nothing less than a state of fatuity of judgment.—And yet, there is something worse than either the profanity of the one or the fatuity of the other, namely the hateful hypocrisy or unclean self-delusion of the man, who can expound with scientific precision the system which comprehends at once pardon through the blood, and sanctification by the Spirit of Christ, and is characterized by the vehemence with which he denounces Unitarians, and Papists, and Arminians, and Antinomians, and all heretics and infidels whatsoever; but who himself remains worldly, and sensual, and proud, and full of envy, malignity and all uncharitableness. No necessity for regeneration is so strong as that of this declaimer about it. Of all classes, the Pharisees presented the least hopeful subjects for conversion to the kingdom of God.

II. The second department of this topic is the illustration of the necessary holiness as being attainable only through a change from a condition of evil. It is to be shewn that this holiness is native to no man; that without the communication of principles which are not natural to him, he will grow up not only destitute of the holiness, but defiled with the opposite impurity; and that all who have not yet had such a communication made to them, must in their present state be disqualified for the kingdom of Heaven.

The main subject under discussion is Regeneration; so that it would be inopportune to enter extensively into the consideration of Original Sin. Nevertheless, since this is the radical evil which Regeneration is designed to remedy, it is requisite that more be done than simply assert its existence.

Observe then, in the First Place, in respect of the Primogenitor of our race himself, that there are three things distinguishable in his case at creation: *first*, his Mind, made fervent in its passions for wise ends of active exertion; *second*, his Body, made importunate in its appetites, for similar ends of activity and the procreation of the species; and *third*, an annexed regulating influence of the Spirit of God; but so annexed as to be resistible, or rather, rejectable, that he might have the character of an accountable agent.

Respecting the first and second of these elements, I am concerned, for the sake of my argument, that it be

carefully observed, that the passions and appetites were ardent and strong from the beginning; and that the whole, at least, of their present ardour and strength in ourselves, is not the consequence of the Fall—that they were made such by the holy Creator for the beneficial ends mentioned—so ardent and strong, that their prevalence over the moral sense would have been certain, but for the regulating power of the third element:—And respecting this third element—that to question the need of such Spiritual regulation for man in his state of innocence; and, even independently of the peculiar ardour and strength of his passions and appetites, to represent him as having been adequate to the task of maintaining his integrity for an hour—during the period occupied by even one thought—appears to me to be the asserting for him, as absurdly as profanely, of an attribute of creature self-sufficiency. You might as well represent his animal life to have been independent of the constant sustentation of Providence.

Observe, in the Second Place, still in respect of Adam himself, that, having transgressed, among all the other losses which he sustained there was that of the regulating influence of the Spirit: so that his mind not only rushed into all disorder, under the force of its own powers, like a machine deprived of its regulator; but became an enslaved victim of the flesh. This state is expressively denominated in the Scripture *carnal mindedness;* and if Adam was ever redeemed from it, it was only through the regulation of the Spirit having been

recovered for him, by the mediation of the Promised Seed.

Observe, in the Third Place, in respect of Adam's *offspring*, that the great original law of the Creator was, that his *fiat*—his command for the formation of an accompanying soul—should constantly go forth on the occasion of every case of corporeal generation.—To represent the parent as being equally instrumental in the formation of the mind, as in the formation of the body of his progeny, infers either gross materialism in the creed, or the fancy, that mind generates mind. The only other hypothesis is the absurd one, that all the souls of his progeny were originally lodged in Adam, in embryo, to be successively developed till the number was exhausted.—Let it therefore be regarded as a point conclusively determined, that every soul has its origin *directly* in the power of God—in accordance with the scriptural declaration, that, when at death "the dust shall return to the earth as it was, the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." (Eccles. xii. 7.)

Observe, in the Fourth Place, that, since all minds proceed directly from the formative hand of God, they are, in the first instance, pure and unperverted.* In making this statement I assume any thing but an

* Turretin's distinction of the different states of mind, is "pure, not pure, impure:" and he selects the middle state as that of the condition of our fallen nativity of mind, through Adam: denying that it is *impure*, but equally that it is *pure*. To this I have little objection. Yet I do object: the proper distinction is bright, blanc, polluted. I hold by the middle term, as indicated in the text, when I express it complexly "pure and unperverted."—(Note to second edition).

attitude of defence and apology: on the contrary, for any one to deny it, and represent them as being at their origin tainted, and inclined to sin, I denounce as being an impeachment of God as being the author of sin, in the worst form possible in which the impeachment can be made—as not only tempting to its commission, but directly creating it. It requires only one other evil thought of Him to perfect the blasphemy, viz. that He will avenge himself on that of which He himself is the originator.—What monstrous shapes of opinion, they are, for holding which, some will boast of the soundness and depth of their theology! And with what pretensions of zeal for the glory of God they will impose on the vulgar, in anathematising those who are concerned about vindicating his character from their sacrilegious imputations! There is need that the people be undeceived, and assured from our private knowledge of them, that those men are no more the holiest in their lives, than they are the most scholarlike in their attainments, who are distinguished for their grimace and fury in their exhibitions of God as an object of horror—sovereign to ordain, yea, to create sin; and then sovereign to punish it—sovereign for all evil!—That any man who inculcates such notions of God should be tolerated—much more, that he should gain credit as a faithful preacher of the Gospel, is somewhat surprising. The explanation appears to be—partly, that such views of God accord with the sentiments which the perverted nature of man entertains of Him, framing hideous idols

for itself in all lands, of different forms, indeed, but all animated by one spirit;—partly, that many, being of a cruel disposition themselves, can more easily comprehend how God should be of such a nature also, than how He should be generous and bountiful;—and partly, because a multitude imagine, that religion consists in being terrified for God; and therefore value that declaimer most whose furious ravings occasion them most of such piety. Having enjoyed such a harrowing of their nerves they reflect complacently, How religious they are; and gratefully, of course, as well as admiringly, publish the excellence of him who painted the image for them in lines and colours so horrifying.—Those are greatly ignorant of the state of matters who may object, that there is no need of such indignant protestation; as if such views, so derogatory to God, were now-a-days, at least, nowhere inculcated or entertained. Even now-a-days, and among ourselves, they are popular and praised as peculiarly *evangelical!*—Having entered this protest against them, with as brief an interruption of the argument as possible, I proceed to its conclusion.

Observe, in the Fifth Place, that, though the soul proceed from God in a state of purity, yet the *fiat* for its formation, according to the original constitutional law, having been evoked by the act of a rebel and for a rebel's issue—as a judgment of righteous government on rebellion, there is no communication concurrently made of the regulating influence of the Spirit: the consequence of which withholdment, or privation, is,

that the soul, even without the enticements of the flesh, would run into disorder; so that even the soul of a child, should it die in infancy, must obtain the regeneration which consists in the bestowment of the Spirit, before it be admitted into the kingdom of God. How much more, should its existence in this world be prolonged, must it not become the victim of the flesh; even though that flesh were in the primitive state of healthful action?—how much more still, when subjected to the morbid action of that flesh, transmitted in a state vitiated by the curse?—and, yet in another degree of evil, how much more, amid the temptations of a disordered world and corrupt companionship?

Such is one of the forms of the Privation-theory of Original Sin;—a theory which has been adopted and advocated by men of the greatest name in theological science, both of former and more recent times*—as answering sufficiently all the demands of the terms and representations of the Scripture; as offering a satisfactory explanation of the moral phenomena of our race; as shocking no principle of reason; as vindicating the divine character from injurious imputations with which the theory of infused and con-created evil affects it; and as amply magnifying both the mediation of Christ, and the regenerative work of the Holy Ghost.

* Turretin, Pictet, Howe, Doddridge, President Edwards, Williams, Payne, *et multis aliis*. See Appendix B.

But, whatever may be the theory according to which the explanation is attempted, the *fact*, that human nature is universally depraved—that sin is as characteristic of man as any instinctive disposition or habit, which may be named, is characteristic of some particular species of animal, is evinced incontrovertibly by all experience, all observation, and the whole complex of the Scripture.

First, in respect of Experience—let each man speak for himself, and leave those friends to speak for themselves, whose amiableness, he alleges, gives the lie to all those vulgar representations of the debasement of human nature—let each man speak for himself: you have enough on hand, I assure you, in defending *yourself* before the throne of God, without officiously volunteering the defence of others. Where, then, is the individual, who will honestly declare that, whatever others may feel and do, his own heart is naturally disposed to the reverence, love, and service of the Creator; yea, who will deny the charge, that that heart is even to a mystery of alienation turned away from his Godhead, resenting his control, and grudging Him the glory of his attributes —wishing He were less wise, less powerful, and especially, less holy than He is; even darkly hoping, that the entire doctrine of the existence of such a One may turn out to be a delusion?—There is only one thing more perverse than a refusal to submit the judgment to the evidence of a fact *observed;* it is the refusing of its submission to the evidence of a fact *experienced.* And

such is the extreme perversity of him who denies the doctrine of man's natural aversion of heart from a holy God: the proof is lodged within his own bosom, and he belies his own consciousness.

Or, *secondly*, should he in the spirit of humility and candour, for which this class of disputers is remarkable, object, that he himself does not afford a fair specimen of humanity, from which to draw a conclusion respecting the race; and that Observation does not warrant the sentence of universal depravity. Will he furnish us, therefore, with the names of those innocent and amiable friends to whom he refers, that we may scrutinize their claims? Nay, he will not. He knows it would but expose to shame both himself and them. No man of discernment ever yet saw that other, in whom, even after but a short acquaintance, he did not perceive something blameworthy, even when he measured him only by the low standard of worldly virtue.—And so uniform are the results of the induction, establishing a character for the species, both in respect of what we ourselves have observed, and in respect of what has been observed by others, as reported in their histories and biographies of all the men, in all the past ages, in all the known regions of the earth, that were we to hear of a new tribe being discovered, we would not for a moment imagine, that possibly they were sinless; but would presently conclude, that they must be depraved and vicious; and as philanthropists would begin to meditate measures for reclaiming them. Simply to be told they were *men*,

would be enough to convince us that they were wicked —"hateful and hating one another."

Or, *thirdly*, if any of us did form that imagination of their being possibly a sinless people, he would do it as profanely as unphilosophically, through despite offered to the testimony of the Scripture.—This testimony is given in three forms, besides that which is common to it with other books of history and biography.—(1.) The first form is that of express declaration, such as—that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," *i.e.*, of carnal mind; which "carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," (John iii. 6, Rom viii. 7;)—that "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth;" yea "that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually," (Gen. viii. 21, vi. 5;)—that, "by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," (Rom. v. 12;)—and that "there is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not," (Eccles. vii. 20;)—so that "if we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and his word is not in us," (1 John i. 10). Well, if it be giving the lie to God, when a man maintains his own sinlessness, it must be equally an act of profanity, when, in affected candour, he maintains the innocence of his neighbours, and magnifies the native amiableness of human nature.—(2.) The second form of the testimony consists of the representation, that "by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified," and that the

Saviour has been provided for "the whole world," so "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his Name among all nations"—"to every creature." Unless there be universality in the need of salvation, such universality in the proclamation of its offer, is worse than meaningless; it is insulting.—(3.) The third form of the testimony consists of the representation of the universal necessity of a moral Regeneration.

Having been brought round again directly to our main subject, it is sufficient that I repeat the quotation of the great standard proclamation, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.) Such is at once the testimony regarding man's natural depravity, and the Law demanding Renovation, as announced by Him who holds the key of the kingdom, and without whose authority no one shall be permitted to enter. Mark first, the imperativeness of the repeated "Verily;" and then, how absolute and universal are the terms of the Law: "Except *a man* be born again." Any one who may be instanced, of whatever age, class, or character, must have been the subject of that new birth, before he be admitted into the kingdom of God. It is a law for the entire species.

In the following instances many attempt a profane limitation of the law; and against the temptation concealed in them all have need to be on their guard.

(1.) Those whose sentiments fall under censure here

affect to approve of such a change as that of Regeneration being represented as necessary, and earnestly inculcated, in the case of those who are flagrantly wicked—blasphemers, harlots, and thieves; but then, they say it can be such persons only, to whom the Scripture refers, when it declares regeneration to be indispensable. In those cases, they further say, that the reason is obvious: the kingdom would otherwise be polluted and degraded by the admission of such characters; and no respectable person would care about entering it with them.—But that the *decent*, also—the correct, the courteous, the benevolent, and amiable should be represented as lying under the same necessity, in consequence of a native depravity, they denounce as being rude and fanatical; and they indignantly protest against any attempt to alarm these amiable, but, it may be, weak-minded persons, with the threat that, unless they undergo a radical change, they shall be excluded from the heavenly kingdom. A thousand times rather, they say, would they wish their daughters to grow up without any religion at all, than have them subjected to a tutelage or ministry which might endanger their being infected by such a pestilent form of it. And so they felicitate themselves on the immunity from the vulgar fanaticism, which they enjoy within their dignified hierarchical church, where, if regeneration be ever mentioned, it is of such a kind as is effected by that graceful ceremony of the Baptism of infants; to be followed, that everything may be perfectly

secure, by that beautiful invention—Confirmation, by the imposition of the apostolically gifted hand of the Bishop. That man knows nothing of the subject who says that this is all caricature. The wealth of the nation is lavished in millions on a system which cherishes in such sentiments the greater part of the upper classes of society, and many of the lower also. Besides, it is far indeed from being only those who are the victims of that church's training that are the victims of this delusion. There are some in all our churches who have need of being disabused of its infatuation.

Observe, therefore, that Nicodemus was precisely one of those *decent* characters: and yet, to him, evidently with personal warning, was it, that our Lord originally announced the law of Regeneration.—So far as *our* comfort and peace in this world are concerned, it makes an important difference, unquestionably, that our neighbours be orderly, discreet, and amiable, instead of being of the opposite character: but when qualification for the kingdom of Heaven is the subject of review, a little reflection may suffice to convince us, that between two hearts, neither of which makes any account of God in the regulation of life, the divine government can see little difference indeed, though one should be that of the purest and most gentle, and, as the world speaks, the most innocent of her sex; and the other, that of the vilest and most abandoned. Or, again: let there be two merchants equally destitute of piety,—the one making no more acknowledgment of God in humble

prayer than is made by the other:—well, is it to be supposed that in His estimation,—when He judges men as candidates for his kingdom, to be present and hold communion with Him there,—it will make any essential difference in favour of the one, that he is honourable in his transactions with his fellow men, while the other is deceitful and fraudulent? It cannot: that grand common characteristic, that they are despitefully heedless of God, merges all minor distinctions, and places them side by side, as condemned and rejected men, who, unless a great revolutionizing work be accomplished on their hearts—that of the one not less than that of the other—shall never see the kingdom of Heaven.

Be on your guard, then, brethren, against the delusion which lurks in the decency and courtesy of the morals of the world, as if these would exempt you from being measured by the standard of Regeneration. When profligacy slays its thousands, decency slays its tens of thousands, through flattering them into fatal repose.* How much greater is not the danger, when, in addition to a decent behaviour, there is the consciousness of a kind disposition?—Let us therefore reflect, that it is a heart changed *towards God*, and which gives the commandment, that we love and serve Him,

* *Licitis perimus omnes.* The distinction is well drawn by the Satirist, in the following verses:—

> "She speaks, behaves and acts, just as she ought;
> But never, never reached one generous thought;
> Virtue she finds too painful an endeavour,
> Content to dwell in *decencies* for ever."—*Pope.*

the first place of authority, which is demanded as the qualification for the heavenly kingdom—a qualification of which the heart may be completely destitute, when it is possessed of many amiable qualities in respect of man. Alas! how many there are whom God beholds loving and delighting in every one else, but treating Himself with coldness and aversion!—That such persons should expect, that those whom they love and befriend should love them in return, is reasonable and just: but that they should expect any thing from that Holy One whom they treat so despitefully; and that, when they die, their friends should entertain hopes of their welfare for Eternity, as bestowed by his hand, is surely the height at once of delusion and insult.—You tell me how amiable your deceased friend was, and how charitable to the poor. I rejoice to hear it; but what is all this to the point? It is not the poor he befriended to whom he has gone to be judged; but that God whom he despised. Let the poor assemble at his grave, and strew it with the wild flowers which they have gathered by the wayside and on the heath (fit emblems of his virtues), and there will be a sufficient reason for the grateful action—he did something for *them*. But when he did nothing for God—honoured Him neither in his heart nor life—despised Him—you know he despised Him, for he would not *pray* to Him—I wonder how you dare affront the Lord by any expression of hope, that He will bless that man in eternity, by admitting him to his presence, to behold his glory in the heavenly king-

dom. I should wonder less, if, with the ignorance you evince, you imagined, since he was not a blasphemer, God might let him alone, without touching him, either for evil or good, since he was neither a friend nor a foe. Even thus, what misery there would be in the destitution—excluded from the kingdom of light, and wandering through a dark and desolate Eternity, without a door to knock at for rest or an alms! But even such an imagination of mitigated wretchedness it is not permitted any one to indulge. God neither will, nor, in consistency with his holiness, can, let the wicked alone. And of such wicked character is every man, who, be his integrity, charity, and patriotism towards his fellow-men what they may, is regardless of God. He may be regardless of a stranger with impunity; but to be regardless of his Creator is punishable insult and rebellion. And such is the criminality with which many of these amiable ones are chargeable whom some would exempt from the judgment of the great Law of Regeneration. The necessity for it is not a whit less urgent in their case, than it is in that of the most corrupt and profligate. Not only do they need that *piety* be generated in them as a new principle—their boasted *beneficence* needs a different inspiration. As actuated at present, instead of being something of which God approves and which He will reward, it bears the character of an insult offered Him, as being a preference of the love of others to his. In order to its being accepted, its source must be so changed as to proceed

from a regard to His commandment, and from a love of men considered as his children, and not merely from constitutional humour. For the production of such beneficence as this, Regeneration is as necessary to many kind and amiable natures, as to those which are habitually the most ungenerous and selfish.

(2.) Insulting, however, to the divine legislation as is that exemption from its law which many would extend to the worldly-decent and amiable, there are some who carry the affront much higher, in exempting the noble, and the wealthy, and the learned, though their morals be corrupt, even according to the reckoning of worldly virtue.—It is by no means unlikely, that there are some, before whom I at present speak, who make a kind of admission, that the law for being born again, before entrance be granted into the kingdom of Heaven, is one proper enough for themselves, and neighbours of like humble circumstances; but who feel, if they do not express themselves to the effect, that it is an extravagance to represent it as being a law which will be applied to the judgment of the princes, and the wealthy merchants, and the poets, and artists, and philosophers of the world.

There are only two principles from which such a state of feeling can proceed; of which it is unnecessary to attempt to determine the one which is more dishonouring to God.—The first is, that He feels no concern for the noble and the wealthy and the learned;

and has made no provision for their salvation on any terms whatever; so that no account is to be taken of them in considering the nature and application of christian law.—The second is, that He will relax His law in accommodation to their high estate.—That the former is the principle of a few envious and malicious natures I shall not question; but it is the latter which is the principle of the great majority of those who at present are under censure. They imagine that God will forego the strictness and sanctity of his law, through respect to the station of the honourable, the wealth of the rich, and the genius of the learned. There is an anecdote in point, which, on account of its profanity, I hesitated at first to produce; but so strikingly illustrative is it of the sentiments of multitudes, that, on reflection, I venture its rehearsal for their exposure and rebuke.—In the court of Louis XV., amid the universal corruption of the nobles, there was one pre-eminent for his wickedness. Some one having remarked to the Lady Maréchal, that the punishment in eternity of one so profligate behoved to be peculiarly dreadful: "Depend upon it, Sir," was her reply, "that God thinks twice before damning a man of that quality." [Carlyle.] —Now, whether the lady in saying so expressed her conviction honestly, or perpetrated a blasphemous joke, I know not: but, of this I am sure, that her words furnish an accurate expression for the heart-thought of thousands; and *that*, not only of the noble, and rich, and learned themselves, who resent the idea of their

being judged by the same law of chastity and prayer by which the ignoble and vulgar shall be judged; but of those pitiful, ignoble, and vulgar also, who not only put up the affront of being so stigmatized, but are ready to second the plea of their insulters, and argue, that it would be severe, if not unfair, were the divine government to judge the great ones of this world by the same standard which is applied to themselves. O, what charity there is in some people's faith! yea, what meanness! yea, what dishonour of God!—In the cravenness of your spirit adulate station and wealth and science, if you will; but you have sin enough without adding to it the imagination, that the Eternal Judge is like yourself, to have respect to crowns and coronets, and silks, and gold, and Greek and mathematics, and poems and pictures, and music and dancing, and that He shall through favouritism for them—even the baubles of the crowns—relax the holiness of his law in the Judgment of mankind.

Brethren, here is your trial: I particularize and mention names; for self-deception often lurks under an acquiescence in general statements. And that I may not be chargeable with invidiousness, I shall make them names of the dead, and of different parties. Is it your belief, that Napoleon Buonaparte and George IV.; that William Pitt and Charles Fox; that George Byron and Robert Burns shall, on the day of God's reckoning with humanity, be tried by the rule of the Regeneration of the Spirit and the Word of his Son?—

I ask you not to give judgment, whether or not they underwent the change before they died. But this demand the Gospel makes on you, that you be clear and decided in your belief, that it is only in the event of their having been regenerated that they shall be admitted into the Paradise of God; and that, in the event of their having died unregenerated, great kings, and emperors, and statesmen, and poets as they were, they shall be doomed to a dreary eternity of wo. Is this your calm conviction? If it is not, then where is your faith? when Christ proclaims as with the voice of a trumpet, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."—It is idle to speak of the necessity of being charitable in our judgments. You are not required to pronounce with certainty on the case of any man, that he died unregenerated, but only, that if he did die in that state he is for ever lost. Imagine him regenerated if you will, and then be hopeful for him: but if you cannot form that imagination, your hopefulness is as profane as it is impotent, in its despite of the divine decree.

What, I demand, do men gain by all this spurious charity?—Not to speak of their inefficiency as pleaders with others,—are they themselves affected by their own more liberal representations of the mercy and amiableness of the character of God, so as to confide in Him with more joyful hearts? On the contrary, there are none of a spirit so dark and gloomy as theirs. Mark these men, brethren, who affect to be so indignant

at our bigotry, when we challenge their indiscriminate canonizing of their favourite geniuses; and, in despite of his own decree, polluting the Heaven of God with all manner of abomination—mark them, I say; they are precisely the men who mock at us for our fanaticism, when we express ourselves hopefully of those having entered, for whom the kingdom has been prepared. Finding that their common sense will not bear the heavenly beatification of their corrupt friends—yea of their corrupt selves—they revenge themselves on the saints, by denying it to them also, and call their abolition of a heavenly state a liberal philosophy! Brethren, beware of dogs! Beware you of the infection of this false charity. In proportion as your faith is marred respecting the execution of the divine threatening, will it suffer marring in respect of the fulfilment of its promise. Doubtfulness about the one must produce doubting of the other; for they are proclaimed by the same authority. Accordingly, you will find no joyful saint holding lax opinions on the subject of the punishment of the wicked.—Besides, your *danger* is great. I refer not so much to the danger of your being chastised of God for tampering with his word, as to the manner in which your reducing of what you regard the severity of his law for others, must influence you in reducing it for yourselves. Having learned to think lightly of the punishment of sin in their case, you will argue with yourselves in the hour of temptation, that it cannot be more dangerous for *you*, and thus be taken

captive in the snare of the Devil. Is it not most pitiful, that from a false tenderness towards those whom God condemns, and for which they give you no thanks, but only sneer at you in contempt, you should thus imperil your own salvation?—Finally, here; in the very last degree of the evil, this spurious charity must relax a man's efforts in the work of training his children, and converting the wicked. All the while that he boasts of his liberality, he is practically of all others the most cruel. His slight impressions of the evil of the disease make him unconcerned about obtaining for them the aid of the only capable Physician.

(3.) Many argue that Christ's declaration must be interpreted in a qualified sense, since the souls of those who die in infancy do not need to be regenerated; and the declaration being thus removed from the category of the *absolute*, and shewn to signify only, that mankind *generally* need the change, they contend, that, besides infants, there may be some, or even many, adults, well trained from their birth, who do not underlie the alleged necessity.

In the sketch of the doctrine of Original Sin, I have already refuted the premises of this representation, and shewn on what principle infants, as well as others, require the renovation; so that only a few additional observations are necessary.—Dr. Payne, in his Lectures on Divine Sovereignty, etc., has made the following judicious distinction: "In the full sense of the term

Regeneration, the sense in which it is used in reference to an adult, comprehending the whole of that moral change which has been described, infants do not need, and are, indeed, incapable of regeneration. In infants there are no mistaken apprehensions of divine things to be corrected; no actually unholy affections towards them to be subdued and removed; for, in the mind of an infant there are, in reference to these things, *no* apprehensions, and *no* affections of any description." (p. 350.) He then proceeds to state, that, "as far as they need regeneration, they are regenerated." Now, we have formerly seen, with considerable distinctness, what this need is;—it is a restoration to their minds of the connexion of the Spirit, "which," as the same author has well expressed it, "will ensure a holy exercise of the powers of their minds, when they become capable of moral perceptions and affections."* I am not curious to inquire when this connexion may be established. Of this only am I certain, that it is not effected by either Popish, or Prelatic, or any other sort of water Baptism.

* On referring to the passage it will be seen, that I have declined quoting a part of it, and given a turn somewhat different to the connection of the first and last sentences. Before Dr. Payne had studied the subject so accurately as he did afterwards, he spoke of a *germ* of sin in the infant mind which required Regeneration for its destruction. This is at variance as well with his own theory propounded in his work on Original Sin, as with that propounded in these pages;—if there is indeed any essential difference betwixt them. Accordingly, when he quotes the former in his later work, he makes the same omission which I have made.—Nevertheless, in more popular and less logical phrase, to represent the soul of an infant as containing such a *germ*, is not greatly inconsistent with either theory: for the *privation* practically amounts to it.

It may be effected in the womb: and especially in the case of the child of pious parents. What is stranger in the idea of this, than in the idea of the soul itself being communicated there? Let those, therefore, who mock at the one, mock at the other also.—Or, the connexion may be effected at the moment of death. This is probably the general law: and let those who mock at this again, mock at the idea also of the infant spirit being apprehended of the divine mercy at all, and conveyed into the heavenly paradise. What know *you* of the conditions of an immortal spirit as it leaves the body, and of the manner of God's dealings with it, that you should so limit either his power or his grace as to pronounce such a regeneration impossible? All the saints rejoice in Him as a God "doing wonders."

I only remark additionally here, that, on the supposition of my being shut up to the alternative, which I have no apprehension I shall ever be, of rejecting the doctrine of the necessity of Regeneration for infants, or of admitting, that any one whosoever that dies in childhood may possibly be subjected to eternal misery, I would unhesitatingly adopt the former.—But the present is not a proper occasion for discussing the question of the Salvation of such as die in childhood; and I must refer to illustrations elsewhere produced.*

(4) Some persist in objecting, that, to interpret our

* See Discourses: First Series, No. XII., On the Re-union of Christian Friends in the Heavenly Kingdom.

Lord's declaration absolutely, consigns the whole of the heathen world to everlasting destruction.—There have been ages of the church when this conclusion would have been admitted, as logically drawn, without its being considered hostile to the doctrine of the premises. But, at the present day, liberalised and intelligent men will not tolerate any dogma which necessarily carries the inference of such sweeping desolation. And, in the present instance, when we maintain the premises we avoid the conclusion, by arguing that, though under the arrangements of God's moral government, it is only by the Instrumentality of Revealed Truth that Regeneration is dispensed among a people to whom that Truth is preached; yet there may be other means by which it is dispensed, to those who are not privileged with more than the glimmerings of the light of Reason and Tradition. I can easily comprehend, how, for the sake of his Son, God may by his Spirit so bless these glimmerings to conscientious inquirers, that their hearts shall acquire a meetness for the enjoyment of the heavenly vision, when it is at last disclosed to them. (Rom. ii. 14, 15). All inquiries more particular than this are properly answered by the admonition, "Strive *ye* to enter in at the strait gate." It is Christ's own rejoinder, and we shall not find a better. (Luke xiii. 24).

(5.) It only remains under this topic, that I advert to the notion, that, though Regeneration is absolutely necessary before admission into the heavenly kingdom,

it may be effected *after death.*—So far as the controversy lies with the Universalist brethren, who contend that there shall be a state of discipline for the wicked in the world to come, in order to their regeneration,—for the saving of time and space I must refer, for their more particular confutation, to the many works which have been published on the subject; satisfying myself with making the appeal generally, to all acquainted with the Bible, whom small criticisms and a spurious benevolence have not sophisticated,—if the scope of its whole testimony be not, that the present world is the only scene of moral trial, in order to salvation or punishment. Besides its unscripturalness, the contrary opinion violates man's natural conscience and his sense of accountability. Both of these principles proclaim for the wicked, not the promise of a reforming discipline, in order to their being advanced to happiness and glory; but the threatening of punishment, for sins which have been committed, in the course of that time of probation which death closes for ever. "Now is the accepted time."

Beside the erroneous notion, however, of those brethren—for, notwithstanding the greatness of their error, I repeat my acknowledgment of brotherhood with some who hold it—there is another, allied to it, which, although much more pestilent in its nature, is less frequently adverted to. It is this, that death will effect a species of *natural* regeneration on the souls of the wicked—that the flesh being the inciting cause of immorality, the spirit, when delivered from its corrup-

tion, shall ascend pure into the eternal world. This notion, I am persuaded, works silent, but extensive and fatal delusion. I shall, therefore, make an exposure of it, though regard to the proportions of illustration requires that it be done briefly.

I reply, then, in the First place, that, although much of human sin is influenced both by the solicitations and deprecations of the flesh, yet, much also is produced independently of the flesh, by the internal disorder of the mind itself. There are many sins *purely spiritual*, if we may use language in describing them, which is usually reserved for characterizing *gracious* affections. The whole of the sins of the apostate angels appear to be of this nature; and though men passed into an entirely spiritual condition, they might continue to sin as *they* do now.—But, I reply in the Second place, that it is taking a great deal too much for granted, to argue on the principle, that in eternity there will be a deliverance for the wicked from corporeal temptation. Resurrection, I repeat, is decreed for them as well as for the just. And that resurrection-body may have, probably will have, appetites, which, though never gratified, will with their craving seduce to sin: at all events it will be susceptible of pain, the infliction of which will provoke to cursing and blasphemy. It does so in this world, how much more will it not prevail amid the despair of the next. Alas, that the argument should be so strong for the perpetuity of the sin of those who die unregenerated!—And yet, there is more demonstration:

I reply, in the Third place, that the corruption occasioned the mind by the temptations of the flesh does not pass away when the temptation ceases its action; but that the mind, itself carnalized, will continue to indulge its wicked imaginations and desires. I shall be forgiven, I am sure, the somewhat disproportionate illustration which I give this point, for the particular manner in which the illustration is made.

After more than the quarter of a century, my impression remains vivid of the horror produced that evening, when Dr. Chalmers, with his living voice and animated gesture, exhibited the following picture to our excited imaginations. Only a part of it refers directly to the subject at present under consideration, but it will not admit of being detached from the other representations with which it is grouped. The passage occurs in his Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans, chap. ii., verse 32. Listen to the appalling eloquence. "There is still another phrase in the verse which may require to be adverted to. It is there said of the people who committed things worthy of death, that they 'not only did the same, but had pleasure in them that did them.' This last marks a higher and a more formed depravity, than the direct commission of that which is evil. To be hurried along by the violence of passion into some deed of licentiousness, may consist with the state of mind that feels its own degradation, and mourns over the infirmity of its purposes. But to look with connivance and delight on the sin of others—to have pleasure in their com-

panionship—and to spirit them on in the ways of disobedience, after, perhaps, the urgency which prompted his own career of it has abated—this argues, not the subjection of one faculty to another, but the subjection of the whole man to sin, viewed as an object of full and formal approbation. This is a reprobacy of the mind, to which the old are sometimes given over, after they have run their course of dissipation. At the outset even of this lawless history, was there a struggling principle within them which debated, and, for a time, parried off the question of indulgence; and after they entered on the transgressor's path, did they taste the bitterness of many a compunctious visitation. But under that hardening process, which we have already explained, the conscience at length lost its tenderness, and all its pangs and all its remembrances were forgotten; and, from one year to another, can the voluptuary, more abandoned than before, lift a louder and a louder defiance to the authority which at one time overawed him. But never, perhaps, does he betray such a fatal symptom of one who is indeed given over, as when age, with all its ailing helplessness, has at length overtaken him; and he can now only smile at the remembrance of joys which he can no longer realize; and the young who assemble at his festive board, are by him cheered forward on that way of destruction, to the end of which he is so fast hastening; and the poison of his own indelicacy spreads its vitiating influence over the unpractised guests who are around him." (Lecture

VI.) It only needs, that we trace the history a little further, to see, how this spirit will retain all its foulness in eternity; even as it did when the withered flesh, from within which it made those manifestations of debasement, no longer offered it any excitement or seduction.

The collapse of mind is very painful, when, after the cessation of rhetoric so eloquent, our own cool argument resumes its course. But there is no help for it.—Finally, then, I reply to the objection at present under consideration, that the circumstances of the wicked, and the scenes disclosed to their view in eternity, will have a tendency the reverse of a converting one. Some will picture the heavenly scene in the grandeur and grace of its majesty, the sanctity and amiableness of its fellowship, and the rapture and sweetness of its song, and then appeal, how it shall be possible for any heart, how wicked soever when in this world, to resist the influence, and not to fall in with the holy exercise.—Was there ever any representation so absurd? Thou witless and profane advocate of the ungodly, know, that, though the influence of the heavenly scene were irresistible, thy friends shall never be admitted, even for a moment, within its sphere. On the Judgment day, the frown and expressed abhorrence of a holy God, and afterwards, the companionship of devils and reprobate men in those regions of darkness and despair, will be the scenes and circumstances, which, instead of softening their hearts, shall indurate them more thoroughly. Ah! instead of flattering them

with the prospect of a future opportunity of penitence and reformation, warn them that they enter not into that place of torment, betwixt which and the heavenly Paradise there is a great gulph fixed, so that neither will they be able to pass and ascend to be taught, nor any celestial inhabitant be able to descend to teach them. (Luke xvi. 26.) Yea, who art thou to warn others? Be warned thyself: These apologies for the wicked indicate a dangerous sympathy with their ungodliness.

The practical conclusion of the whole matter is a summoning of all to inquire, if they have attained to this Regeneration so necessary; and an exhortation of those who find that it is certain, or that there is reason to suspect, that they have not attained to it, to give no sleep to their eyes nor slumber to their eyelids, till they have secured the indispensable blessing; "for there is no work nor device, nor knowledge nor wisdom in the grave whither they go," so that they shall rise from it to be judged, the same in character as when they lay down in it. The time is at hand, when the alternative proclamation shall be, "He that is unjust let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy let him be filthy still:" Or, "he that is righteous let him be righteous still; and he that is holy let him be holy still." When death "changes," how it *fixes* a man's countenance! but more permanently does it fix his character.

As tree falleth so it lieth;
As man liveth so he dieth.

SECTION THIRD.

THE INSTRUMENTALITY OF REGENERATION.

IN discussing the question of the Instrumental Cause of Regeneration, I shall limit my observations to the case of those adults who are privileged with the dispensation of the gospel; satisfying myself, so far as the cases of the heathen and those who die in infancy are concerned, with the remarks which have been made under the preceding Section.

I remark, then, generally, that the great revolution of Regeneration, consisting, as has been explained at large, in such a change of the direction of a man's affections, that he now loves what he once hated, and hates what he once loved, is produced, so far as means are concerned, precisely in the same way in which changes are produced in the minds of worldly men, in respect of temporal objects. We have already seen that remarkable changes take place in the manner of the direction of *their* affections too; so that we shall find one expressing himself to-day in language of warm admiration respecting a person whom we heard him denouncing last night even to cursing; and evidently,

as sincerely in the one case as in the other. Now, in what manner, and by what means was the change produced? Did he fall asleep hating, and awake loving, without even a dream, of which he has any recollection, to influence him? Or, can the explanation of it be, that, in a freak of humour, and to shew his mastery over himself, he commanded his heart to make the change, and that it submissively complied?—Or, that he commanded it to do so, in a spirit of prudence; or, as imperatively enjoined by a superior? It is absurd to suppose it. Under such influences he might change his language, but never his feelings. No man can dispose of his affections as the centurion disposed of his soldiers, who went, and came, and acted as he arbitrarily ordered them. It is preposterous to imagine that he would ever make the attempt.—The explanation of the case instanced is plainly this,—the man received other information about his neighbour's character. The first report made to him was, that he was cunning, selfish, and dangerous; and believing it to be true, he could not refrain from abhorring him: the feelings of his heart must conform to the decisions of his judgment. But this morning he received a report quite the opposite of the former. A friend assured him, that the individual in question is, on the contrary, a person of most honourable character; and, that, were he himself to fall into difficulties, he would be one of the earliest by his side with sympathy and relief. Believing this latter report to be correct, and the former to be false, with a change

of judgment there comes necessarily a change of feeling: and hence we find him loving ardently to-day what he hated yesterday with so much detestation.

There is no arrangement in our mental economy more obvious, than that our affections are regulated and controlled by our judgments; and that, if we desire to change men's feelings, we must labour to change their opinions. Notwithstanding its plainness, however, so strong is its bearing on the doctrine of Regeneration, and so ready are some to contradict all their formerly professed philosophy, when brought into contact with this subject, that I judge it proper to amplify the illustration, though at the risk of its being regarded superfluous.—A successful merchant proposed to invest his gains in land; and there were two estates in the market which competed for his favour. He went and surveyed them both; and on his return, last night, expressed himself in the company of his friends, as being very dissatisfied with one of them, while the other was all he could desire; and as being resolved to conclude a bargain for it to-morrow. But, to the astonishment of these friends, he hastened away next morning, and purchased that which on the previous night he reviled, in despite of that which he so warmly eulogised. How is the change to be explained? Most easily: and his friends will cease their wonder when they here the account. After the company had broken up, one present took him aside, and privately assured him, that he was greatly mistaken in his estimate—that much of

the beauty of that which he preferred would soon be desolated by a highway being driven through its centre; and that the title-deeds, besides, were in a very unsatisfactory condition: whereas that which he so much disesteemed, was not only capable of being cultivated, through the excellence of its soil, into a state of great beauty and profit, but, underground, was rich in mineral stores.—Having confidence in the honesty, and affection, and superior knowledge of this friend, he believed him; and his judgment being thus changed, his affections underwent a corresponding alteration; so he went away with all the wealth he had, and bought that estate. (Matthew xiii. 46.)

Precisely so is it in matters spiritual. The change of heart in Regeneration is produced by a previous change of judgment. The erroneous opinions of the sinner are corrected, and that corrects his feelings. He receives new information, and that gives another direction to his affections. Plainly, the Bible removes his delusions; and, in shewing him the true nature of objects, makes him love many things which he formerly hated, and hate many things which he formerly loved. When he believes its report—when he takes Bible views of objects—looks at them through its telescope—looks at them through its microscope—looks at them through its atmosphere;—when he looks at God, looks at Christ, looks at himself, looks at his soul, looks at this world, looks at death, looks at eternity in Bible light, the look revolutionizes him. See what a commo-

tion has been produced among the affections of his spirit, so soon as this heavenly light, altering the decisions of his judgment, has dawned on his mind! He is now with ardour pursuing objects which he formerly despised, or feared, or abhorred; and fleeing, as when a man flees from the plague, or from his house on fire, from objects which he formerly considered harmless, or in which his soul delighted. The Bible light has disclosed friends, where he thought there were none but foes; and foes, where he thought there were none but friends. (2 Corinthians v. 17.)

Such is the Instrumentality by which Regeneration is effected—the Bible believed, that is, received as true: and there are especially two parties here also, as on a former occasion, about whom I am concerned in having the simplicity of the account pressed on their attention, and having it established for their conviction on Scriptural authority.

First, there are the conscientious, but ignorant and fanciful, who imagine that there is much more that is mystical, than there truly is, in the regenerative change; and who either distress themselves with doubts because they have no experience of any thing of that character; or, in their search for something extraordinary, discredit the work of the Spirit of Truth, by ascribing to his operation fancies and impressions which are the product of their own weak and disordered minds. To all such, I say, that, in Regeneration, the mind feels nothing

differently, in respect of the manner in which the change is produced, from what it feels when changed on some worldly subject, by the reports, or arguments, or representations of a friend. I cannot avoid reiterating the illustration. You felt abhorrence of a certain character last night; this morning you admire and love him; and when your neighbours express their astonishment at the change, you reply, that there is nothing wonderful in the case; that you can give a clear and rational account of it:—that a friend, in whose testimony you have confidence, has since that assured you, that the individual in question is of a very different character from what you had previously supposed him to be; and that your opinions of him having undergone a change, your feelings towards him have necessarily changed too.—Is not all this most easily comprehended? Well, the case is every whit as plain and comprehensible in the matter of Regeneration. The Bible is a trustworthy friend's report concerning the character and purposes of God; and the belief of it, in changing the sinner's judgment, changes his heart. He can tell distinctly how he was changed. He says, he once imagined that God was a gloomy, hard task-master; but that, on reading the Bible, he found he had been most grossly and wickedly deluded; that the very reverse was the truth;—that he discovered *there*, that God is a Father so rich in mercy, that he spared not His Only Begotten Son, when there was need of Him for his salvation. So he opens the Scripture, and pointing to the sixteenth verse of the third chapter of the

Gospel according to John, or the thirty-second verse of the eighth chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, or some similar passage of the Regenerating Record, he says with emotion—"*there* is what changed my heart: it altered my views of God: it gave me a different account of Him from what I formerly entertained; and ever since I have loved Him."—It is another question, How was the man brought to the belief of the Bible? This will be treated of under a subsequent topic. But, meanwhile, let it be clearly understood, that it is the truth of the Bible believed, and this means alone, by which the heart is savingly changed. And when any one tells us of certain feelings which he pleads as an evidence of his regenerated state, let us immediately ask him, What part of the Bible produced these feelings? If he be unable to refer to book, and chapter, and verse, let us ask him, What were the words? Or, if he cannot quote them accurately, let us ask him, What was the idea? Unless he can give us this, we must question the sufficiency and genuineness of his evidence.* He is not savingly changed, if it was not the Bible that did the work. That Bible is the seal, and the only seal, which the Spirit employs for making an *impression* on the heart; and it is not until we discover the impress of its

* This is perhaps too unqualifiedly expressed; for many have been regenerated who could not read the Word; but depended on the correctness of the report made of its contents by friends and preachers. The statement, however, as originally made in the text, is retained on account of the directness of its illustration, which would have been encumbered by the introduction of the qualification, See Discourses, Second Series —"The Word is nigh thee."

characters, that we are warranted to conclude that the impression is of God.

The other party, for whose sake I insist on the foregoing simple view of the Instrumentality of Regeneration, consists of those who make the alleged mysticism of the subject an apology for dismissing all thoughts of it. As formerly stated, we neither deny, nor wish we had an opportunity for denying, that mystery rests on one department of the doctrine; but since obscurity of this nature is made an objection by some unreasonable minds, I am concerned about reducing the amount of their apology for their unbelief, on their own grounds; and therefore deny, that, even thus far, is there any mystery in our faith. Recurring to those great and sudden changes of feeling which they themselves undergo—blessing to-day what they cursed yesterday, possibly to return to the cursing to-morrow—when we ask an explanation of all this, they reply, that they had good reason for making the change; that they received more accurate information; that it was the Truth which produced the change. And, when we push forward the inquiry, asking, where they discovered the Truth, they will give us for their authority their party newspaper or magazine.—Now, is this any more rational and satisfactory, than that the christian, being asked the cause of *his* change, when he refuses to take his wonted part in the revelry, should answer, that it was the Truth which changed him, too; and that, being further asked, Where *he* found the Truth? he should reply, In the Word of

God: that that Book had given him new views, and, by necessary consequence, different feelings, in regard of his duty, and the end of his existence? *They* plead, in defence of their change of feeling from blessing to cursing, the anonymous slander of a newspaper, possibly communicated by a drunken correspondent;—*he* pleads in defence of his change from cursing to blessing, the declaration of the oracle of the Spirit of Truth. That is, in a sentence, the whole of the difference betwixt the christian, and those who call themselves rational and liberalized philosophers.

Before I proceed with adducing Scriptural evidence for the establishment of the point hitherto illustrated only metaphysically—that Bible truth believed works all the change of Regeneration, I observe, that it seems almost preposterous to furnish such scriptural proof. Who needs it? All unregenerated persons present feel, at this moment, that, were they to credit the Bible—were they to adopt *its* views of matters, their hearts would directly undergo a great change; just as the heart of the merchant in quest of an estate was instantly changed, on believing his friend's testimony about the mines of silver and gold. It is because you do not read the Bible, or, reading, do not believe it, that you remain the poor worldling you are. Oh, if you believed that Book, as it discourses on God, and on your own immortal soul, and on Hell, and on Christ, and on Heaven, it would pierce you like a sword (Heb. iv. 12), it would

break you like a hammer (Jer. xxiii. 29), it would melt you like a fire (Jer. xxiii. 29), it would generate you anew, and produce you another man (1 Peter i. 23). —And in the case of those of us who are already regenerated, but whose feelings are languid, and whose action is sluggish—who of us does not feel, that the great secret of his weakness lies in the scantiness of his believing what the Bible declares; and that, if he gave its truths a more ample reception, his heart's affection for divine objects would be stronger?—How humiliating it is to reflect, that, notwithstanding all our invectives, and our denunciations of the scepticism of others, it is nothing but unbelief which is wrong with ourselves!

Notwithstanding, however, all this metaphysical and experimental plainness of the point, that it is the Truth of the Bible which, in changing a man's opinions regenerates him, through the change which is thereby necessarily produced on the affections of his heart; yet, of such importance is it as a practical lesson, and so much has simplicity been obscured in the course of controversy, perplexing the simple, and enervating the preaching of the gospel, that it is necessary to produce a part of the Scriptural evidence. I select the following:—

James i. 18. Of his own will begat He us, with the Word of Truth.

1 Peter i. 23. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God.

2 Peter i. 4. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.

John vi. 63. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.

John xvii. 17. Sanctify them through thy Truth, thy Word is Truth.

John xv. 3. Now ye are clean, through the Word which I have spoken to you.

John viii. 31, 32. If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.

Ephesians vi. 17. The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Hebrews iv. 12. The Word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Such is a specimen of the Scriptural testimony on the subject, in which we find, not only that Regeneration is ascribed in express terms to the instrumentality of the Word—as being that *seed* by which those who have been *born again* were *begotten* of God;* but, that, when viewed under particular aspects, the representation is regularly and consistently the same. Is Regeneration a slaying of the natural enmity of the heart? then, it is the Word which is the sword. Is

* The first three passages cited belong to the same category; if not the fourth also. The first determines that the σπορα of the second is used in the *animal* and not *vegetable* sense. It is surprising that so few commentators declaredly recognise this. Is ignorance or affectation of modesty the cause? And yet, in the case of those who shew that they see it, I wonder not that they should refrain from expatiating on the subject. *I* cannot, how impressive soever the representation is. I content myself with maintaining, that the Scriptural representation in these passages is, that the Word, as containing the *spirit* of God, *impregnates* the soul of the believer with His own nature; so that he is a *son* of God.

it the quickening of a man into a new life? then, it is the Word which vivifies: Is it the production of a state of holy affection? then, it is the Word which cleanses and sanctifies: Is it an emancipation of the soul from bondage? then, it is the Word which gives the freedom. In sum, Is it an impartation to the soul, morally, of the divine nature? then, the promises of the Word are the vehicle of the communication.

Observe, accordingly, with what admirable adaptation to its regenerative work the instrument is constructed. What majesty it discloses to view, for awing the heart into the reverence of God! What love, for exciting its confidence in Him! What beauty in holiness, for exciting its admiration! What vileness in sin, for exciting its loathing and detestation! What wo there is in its threatening, for fear! What richness in its promise, for hope! How humiliatingly and sharply it convicts and reproves! How tenderly and animatingly it consoles and encourages!—And with what variety of mode! so that none may weary; so that every age, every disposition, every frame of mind, all states of education, all conditions of fortune, every relation, and every office of life, may be specially and appropriately addressed—by didactic statement, by argument, by history, by biography, by epistle, by vision, by prophecy, by parable, by proverb, and by song—and with all rhetorical persuasion and impression of pathos and horror, of beauty and sublimity! "The law of the Lord is PERFECT, converting the soul."

Let this perfect instrument be applied to the heart; in other words, let there be a Belief of the Truth, the failure of Regeneration as the result is impossible.

Having demonstrated by all kinds of argument, that Regeneration is produced by the Bible believed, our advance in the illustration of the main subject is delayed by the question raised in the schools, What *kind* of belief or faith is it which affects the saving change?—there being many, though their number rapidly diminishes, who make the distinction of a speculative or historical belief of the understanding, and an appreciating, approving, and embracing faith of the heart.

Now, although I am well convinced, that this distinction is vain and baseless; yet, lest there should by any possibility be grounds for it, let it be carefully observed, that all parties agree, that, unless the heart be moved, the affections excited, and the will determined to make a choice, there is no salvation. The only question is, if there either exist, or, if in the nature of things, there can exist, what is called a barren, speculative, historical belief in the Gospel? My own opinion, as just intimated, is formed very decidedly, that there is not and cannot be such a thing: and that, when there is no movement of the affections, there is no belief of either one kind or another;—that faith is a simple, and not complex act of the mind—that there is only one kind of it—and that that one kind infallibly regenerates a man.

Since all agree that there is no salvation unless the heart be affected, I feel comparatively little anxiety about having the simplicity of the nature of faith established. Nevertheless, my concern is considerable; both, that some honest inquirers may be relieved of perplexity; and, that not a few self-deceivers may be convicted and disabused of their delusion.—When that distinction is made of speculative and cordial believing, producing another, of theoretical and practical infidelity, many take the consolation to themselves, which, although it be a miserable one, is yet more than they are entitled to, viz., that, though they are bad enough, yet, thank God! (such is their manner of speech), they are not so bad as those horrid characters who deny and revile the Bible;—that, though they admit there is reason for humbly confessing to the charge of being guilty of much practical infidelity, yet, God be thanked! they have not been left so far to themselves as to be theoretical infidels, of such a stamp as that of Thomas Paine, or Robert Owen.—Well, it is not perhaps so virulent in degree; but I am certain, that it is essentially of the same nature. If they do not believe, so as to be affected at heart, they do not believe at all. Their judgments are as little convinced, as their feelings are impressed. And both on scriptural and metaphysical grounds I certify them, that, since their affections are not excited, their understandings also dispute, and question, and suspect, and refuse credence to, the statements of the Book: so that, not only to all practical ends, but,

in every sense of the term, they are *infidels;* the principal difference between them and such characters as Paine and Owen being, that those men are bolder, or less polite, or more honest, or less prudent, in speaking out, and declaring their convictions.—Now, if I succeed in making this clear, it will be a good service performed for two parties;—for the deluded men themselves, shewing them to be in their true characters—*infidels;* and for their friends, shewing them how to deal with them—*as infidels,* who need to be taught "which be the first principles," even that the Bible is not an imposture; in proceeding with which argument they will probably find, that they must go to work even more rudimentally, and teach them the alphabet of the existence of God, his Providence, and his Moral Government.

I bend myself, therefore, to this demonstration; and shall, in the First place, remove an objection which some make to the doctrine of the simplicity of Faith, as being a "conviction of the truth," on the ground of Scriptural phraseology. For instance, at Rom. x. 9, we read thus: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth, and shalt believe with thy heart, . . . thou shalt be saved." From this, and a number more of similar expressions, they argue, that there is a peculiarity in saving belief, as being a believing with the affections, in contradistinction from a speculative believing with the understanding only.—Now, although it were certain, that the expression "with the heart," had the same force when used by the apostle, which it has when used among ourselves,

yet this would not warrant the inference, that there is another kind of believing 'without the heart.' Holding, as I do, the opinion of the simplicity of faith, I nevertheless often speak of a 'cordial belief,' and do not admit that there is any inconsistency in it; inasmuch as I am persuaded, that conviction of the truth is invariably accompanied with an affection of the heart, as a consequent.—But though the inference were legitimately drawn by the objectors, they misapprehend the nature of the premises. In the Scriptural use of language, no such distinction is observed as that which obtains among us, in ascribing the affections and passions only, to the action of the heart. According to that phraseology, the *heart* perceives, and judges, and reasons, in the same way as when we assign these intellectual exercises to the *head*.* To believe with the heart, then, necessarily implies nothing more than to be 'sincerely convinced,' as distinguished from a mere pretence of believing. The text under consideration does indeed contain a contrast, or rather a contradistinction; but, instead, of its being betwixt a cordial and speculative belief, it is betwixt an oral confession, and a mental conviction.

I observe, in the Second place, that, when the apostles went forth into the world, calling on men to believe the Gospel which they preached, in order to

* "The 'heart' is variously used in Scripture: sometimes for the mind and understanding, sometimes for the will, sometimes for the affections, sometimes for the conscience, sometimes for the whole soul." —*Dr. Owen.*

their being saved, they must have used the term in its common acceptation; otherwise their speech would have been unintelligible or deceptive. That common acceptation, then, was, 'the crediting of a declaration.' Accordingly the apostle, when felicitating the church of Thessalonica on the grace bestowed on them, refers to their faith under this form of expression—"our testimony among you was believed;" and again, in the same epistle, he defines it as being "the belief of the Truth." (2 Thess. i. 10, and ii. 13.)—Why encumber a doctrine so simple, with the representation that there is a great variety of faiths; and perplex some, and cause the delusion of others, in the way we have seen, by calling on them to examine, if it be the right species of which they are possessed? There is no wrong species: there is only one kind: and the proper question is, Believest thou the Record? That is simply, but searchingly, thy trial.—When any one, however, answers, that he does believe it, the question is a fair one, when his neighbours proceed to interrogate him respecting his feelings—not that they may determine if his faith be of the right kind, but that they may see if it be true that he believes at all.

I observe, in the Third place, that when the Scripture represents ignorance as being the privative cause of all sin, it, by implication, represents knowledge as being the producing cause of all righteousness.—I take advantage, here, of an illustration, the authorship of which will command universal respect. In the re-

commendatory Epistle, prefixed to the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, by some of the most celebrated divines of that age, who were not members of the Assembly, such as Manton, Gouge, Venning, Poole, and Bates, the following passage occurs:—

"The understanding is the pilot and guide of the whole man;—that faculty which sits at the stern of the soul: but as the most expert guide may mistake in the dark, so may the understanding, when it wants the light of knowledge. 'Without knowledge the mind cannot be good' (Prov. xix. 2); nor the life good; nor the external condition safe (Ephes. iv. 18). 'My people are destroyed for the lack of knowledge' (Hos. iv. 6).—It is ordinary in Scripture to set profaneness, and all kinds of miscarriages, upon the score of ignorance. Diseases in the body have many times their rise from distempers in the *head;* and exorbitancies in practice, from errors in the judgment. And, indeed, in every sin, there is something both of ignorance and error at the bottom: for did sinners truly know what they do in sinning, we might say of every sin what the Apostle speaks concerning that great sin, 'Had they known Him they would not have crucified the Lord of glory,' (1 Cor. xi. 8). Did they truly know, that every sin is a provoking the Lord to jealousy, a proclaiming war against Heaven, a crucifying the Lord Jesus afresh, a treasuring up wrath afresh unto themselves against the day of wrath; and that if ever they be pardoned, it must be at no lower a rate than the price of his blood—*it were scarce*

possible but sin, instead of alluring, should affright, and instead of tempting, scare."

I accept of that "scarce possible," as being more than compensation for the countenance which those eminent men subsequently appear to give to the distinction betwixt speculative and cordial faith:* and, especially, when the juxta-position of the quotation of 1 Cor. xi. 8, rebukes their hesitancy, and enjoins us to dismiss their faltering "scarcely possible," and adopt in its place the affirmation of its being "impossible utterly."

I observe, in the Fourth place, that to define faith simply as being "a conviction of the Truth of the Word," is the only view which will bear a metaphysical scrutiny, when we consider the end which it is designed to serve. That end is the movement of the affections. But when it is defined to be, a believing with the heart, in the sense of believing with love, and reverence, and affiance, and loyalty, does not this contain the desired state of affection already? so that that which is proposed as the effect, is assigned the place of the cause; or rather, that which is the cause is constituted the cause of itself.

* The qualification which they introduce is as follows: "But yet the knowledge we especially commend is not a brain-knowledge, a mere speculation; this may be in the worst of men, nay, in the worst of creatures, the devils themselves, and that in such an eminency as the best of saints cannot attain to in this life of imperfection; but an inward, a savoury, a heart knowledge, such as was in that martyr, who, though she could not dispute for Christ, could die for Him." There is a great confounding here of two things essentially different, viz., knowledge and belief. I *know*, for instance, what the Mass is, more accurately, I am sure, than the majority of Popish Priests; but instead of *believing* it to be true, I abhor it as being a structure of most blasphemous imposture.

—Besides, I ask, what produced that love, and reverence, and affiance, and loyalty, which, according to this theory, form a constituent element, instead of a consequent of faith? Was it a preceding act of faith? And if that was cordial too, what produced the cordiality?—Unless you have recourse to an infinite series of such cordial acts, you must come at last, as an origin, to that *bare* belief, at whose nakedness you mock; or have recourse to the dogma, the unscripturalness of which will afterwards be exposed, of a *holy relish* being communicated to the mind, independently of, and antecedently to, the operation of the Word.

A few sentences will be sufficient for dismissing the objection, that, in such a *bare* belief, there is nothing of a *virtuous* character, wherefore it should be made a condition of salvation. What do the objectors mean? Do they contend for a *meritorious* faith? Is it not sufficient that they be assured, that, whatever it be of itself, it will *produce* holiness?—Nevertheless, I am not unconcerned about faith being in its own nature a morally *qualifying condition* of salvation—acceptable in God's sight for its own sake, as well as for its fruitfulness; and it is therefore I maintain, that, when others refer to philosophers, and statesmen, and newspaper editors and their correspondents, as *their* authorities—for you to stand forward and maintain, that *you* believe God—that you forego all your own prejudices and imaginations, and submit your opinions to be regulated by Him, is an act of the highest devotional morality. When others, by

their unbelief, according to the judgment pronounced by the holy apostle, "make God a liar," (1 John v. 10;) you, by "receiving his testimony," have set to your seal, that "God is true," (John iii. 33.) With such a character, the alleged *bareness* of your faith need not cause you any shame.

Some, however, before surrendering their old notion of a cordial faith, insist on being well assured, that a simple conviction of the Truth will certainly produce holiness of feeling; being resolved, that they shall not prostitute the name of saving faith, on any thing which either does not contain the holiness in itself, or will not infallibly produce it. This concern is laudable; and the security which we offer them is proportionally ample; it is that of *the human constitution.* In everyday life, not only do we employ no means for changing the *feelings* of our friends, except the changing of their *opinions;* but we feel certain, that, if we succeed in the latter case, we shall succeed in the former. This is the fixed law of our nature. There is no order of cause and effect in all creation more surely established. Let care be taken of the believing, and the believing will take care of the feeling.* It is true, we sometimes fail in affecting the heart, when there is every reason for supposing that we have convinced the understanding; but the explanation of the failure is, that we have miscalcu-

* FAITH consists in a person's *understanding*—HOPE in the *will.* These two cannot be separated. They are like the two cherubim over the mercy-seat."—*Luther's Table-talk,* ccxcvii.

lated the kind of truth necessary to the end. Whereas, the truths of the Gospel being adapted by divine wisdom, the result is sure. When the "Word of God" is believed, then does it approve itself "sharper than any two-edged sword." (Heb. iv. 12.) It is on this ground, I contend, that to believe the statements of the Bible—to believe them in the common acceptation of the term—to believe them historically, as when you believe a narrative of Gibbon or Hume—to believe them sociably, as when you believe the report of an acquaintance—to believe them economically, as when you believe that by sunrise you will have light for to-morrow's journey—to believe them mathematically, as when you are convinced by a demonstration of Euclid—to believe them metaphysically, as when you are convinced by an argument of Edwards—to believe these statements of the Bible, I say, in any form (there is indeed but one form), and remain at heart insensible to their influence, is a natural, constitutional impossibility: So that, unless your affections be excited, you are clearly convicted of an *infidel* doubtfulness, at least, of the truth.—Let the formalist search himself, and he will find it all true. You doubt the Bible: that is the one reason of your cold, prayerless, earthly spirit. You are practically infidel, only because you are so theoretically.—Plead no more, then, in mitigation of the censure pronounced on you, that you are at least a speculative believer. As well might you tell me, supposing a cry were raised of the roof of this house giving

way, that the reason of some sitting still, when the rest rose and fled, was, that they believed it only speculatively—with a historical faith; when their neighbours believed it cordially! Could any explanation be more absurd! Would not the true reason be, that they considered it a false alarm? So is it with you: when you are not seen fleeing from the threatened wrath of this Book to its proffered salvation, every other explanation is a mockery but that you are infidel—of the same mind as Paine and Owen—a questioner and impugner of the veracity of the Bible.

Seeing, however, that there are so many divines, and some of these of great respectability, who have maintained, that there is a speculative faith of the intellect, distinct from a faith in which the heart is affected, there must be some appearances which have occasioned the mistake. It will be profitable shortly to examine what these are.

The FIRST is the case of that great multitude, who, although they are obviously not affected by the truth in their hearts, yet do not rise up to controvert it; but on the contrary, declare their acquiescence in it; and even at times strenuously contend for it.—Now, is it not remarkable, that, for the sake of sparing such persons as these the imputation of infidelity, grave divines should violate both the Scripture and common sense, and defend their characters as believers in the gospel, of a certain kind!—as men who have advanced

the length of believing speculatively and historically, and who are deficient only in respect of their not believing cordially! Is the phenomenon so mysterious, that recourse must be had to an explanation so fantastical? Is *hypocrisy* so rare in the world, that the fear of the loss of character, of caste, and wealth, or the hope of their gain, or political or sectarian partisanship, should cause us any wonder, that men shall not only profess, but zealously contend for, that which they believe as little as they love?—Or, without imputing motives so unworthy, how much of the pretended acquiescence is explicable on the principle of a constitutional amiableness, which fears to injure the feelings of friends; or a civilized courtesy, which is not so rude as to contradict its company.—But I rest the explanation of many of those cases which the objectors regard as being most conclusive for their views, especially on the influence of educational habits and impressions. What will not these effect? Why, they will make a man feel as if he believed all the Paradise Lost, and the Paradise Regained, and all the Pilgrim's Progress besides; when, it is almost needless to say, he does not believe the account of a single scene of any of them. So is it with a multitude, in respect of the Bible: it is nothing but a Paradise Lost, and Paradise Regained, and Pilgrim's Progress to them. They do not mock at it: they have rather a kindly feeling to it: and they resent the conduct of the men who abuse and revile it: but they do not believe it—there is no reality in it for

them; and hence it is inoperative on their hearts. Or, should the fancy of its scenes occasionally affect their feelings, it is as when a hobgoblin story frightens them in the dark: that is all.—In the foregoing considerations, we find the explanation of the greater number of those appearances, which have induced some to contend, that there is what they call a speculative, as distinct from a cordial faith. But there is yet a more interesting case, requiring greater discrimination in its treatment:—

It is, SECONDLY, that of the class who believe *partially*—only a certain part of the testimony. Now, I not only admit, but contend, that there may be such a partial belief, yea, that there is to be found much of it, without any change being produced which is entitled to the character of Regeneration. But wherein is this inconsistent with the foregoing statements? The principle pleaded for is, that the belief of the *whole* of the Bible will secure the end. Nor let any one tauntingly say, that this is a convenient evasion, since it will be difficult to find any one who has believingly embraced the whole of the contents of the large volume, from whose unregeneracy of heart the principle might be confuted. By the belief of the whole of the Bible, the candid and discerning may easily perceive that I mean its *entire system*—its characteristic features. And there are few who are disposed to reduce these to a number so small, as that which he who now conducts this argument reckons sufficient for producing the end.

(1.) The First is its testimony, that you, even *you* yourself, are by nature of an unclean and depraved character—offensive in the sight of the divine Holiness—and ready, it may be in an hour's time, to be consigned over to everlasting misery. Do *you* believe *this*—that such was once your condition, if it is not your condition at present, having been extricated from it by the Son of God. How few believe it, either in respect of their own characters, or of the anger of the Almighty as a holy Avenger of sin! I do not refer to any dogmatical controverting of the doctrine of the everlasting duration of the punishment of those who die in unbelief; but, to the wide disbelief of the whole of the testimony, that all the unregenerated are in a perilous condition. Do *you* believe it? Otherwise, you may be certain, that your heart has not been savingly changed. It is an essential element of that truth, the belief of which converts the soul.—But, strait is the gate! Although there be no genuine conversion, unless this truth be believed, yet it may be believed so as only to harden the heart in impiety—making it reckless, and deepening its enmity against God. Not by itself, but only in combination with other elements of truth is it efficacious for good.

(2.) I, therefore observe, that the Second testimony of the Gospel, the belief of which is necessary for the regeneration of the heart, is, that God, in his paternal mercy, sent his Son into the world, to die for the expiation of men's sins; and then raised Him from the

dead to govern them, and guide them to a kingdom of immortal happiness and glory. Believest thou *this* also? Alas! that for so many professors it should be a mere fable—a mere legendary tale—a mere dramatic fiction, in the rehearsal of which, if well rehearsed, they take some interest, as in the rehearsal of other fictions; but something which they do not believe. Do *you* believe it?—Do you believe that it is *a fact*, that so recently as about eighteen hundred years ago, so little distant as Jerusalem, the Son of God, in a state of Incarnation, died as a sacrifice for human guilt;—that He presently revived, and rose from the grave, and ascended into Heaven, where He sits enthroned, as anointed of his Father, the Governor of the world, the King of kings, and Lord of lords—even Jesus of Nazareth—to whom our Queen, and all our legislators, and nobles and merchants, and literary men, are accountable as subjects.—Amid all the other things which friends have told you, and which you believe, is this one, of which you are certain, having been assured of it by the Word of God? If it is not, then your heart cannot have been savingly changed. Under the belief of some other truths, it may have so far changed as to make you a graver and more sober man, and more pleasant among your friends, and more useful to the world; but, unless the tidings about Christ formed the principal element of that combination of truths which influenced the change, it cannot be *that* Regeneration, without which no man shall see the kingdom of Heaven.—And yet,

again, strait is the gate! Although without the presence of this belief there can be no genuine conversion, yet, unless there be added still more, the end will not be effected. The devils believe all this length—and *cordially* too, for in their hearts they *tremble*, but tremble only, in consequence of their neither believing, nor having an opportunity to believe, any such proclamation of mercy for themselves, as that which is proposed for the belief of men.*

(3.) Observe, therefore, carefully, that there is a Third article in the testimony of the Gospel, in the belief of which faith is consummated, but without believing which no saving effect will be produced: it is this, that Christ has been provided by the divine mercy as a Saviour for *thyself*. Do you believe *that?* I know not if there be any who believe that a Redeemer has been provided for others, and stop short there; except in such cases of *mania* as that by which Cowper was affected. But, of this I am certain, that unless a man believe that provision has been made for himself *individually*, regenerated he cannot be. What would it avail to assure me, that a Saviour had been raised up for the empire of China, unless you assured me that He had been raised up for the empire of Britain too? it would leave me trembling like a devil. If you would affect

* Hence the phraseology of the Marrow-men—*mankind-sinners*, which many so ignorantly stigmatize as barbarous. In their plea for the doctrine that Christ is God's gift to sinners universally, without exception of a single soul, they made the qualification that it is to sinners of the human species, and not to the fallen angels.

my heart with joy and sanctity, you must present my faith with a report of mercy for *myself*. And it must be quite express. A mere peradventure—the chance of ten thousand to one, and much less, of only one to ten thousand, that I am an object of welcoming love, will not satisfy my demand; when not only Eternal Life is at stake, but, when the Second Death is the penalty of loss. Such an exigency will admit of no chance of failure, how small soever the chance may be. Accordingly, the gospel is replenished to overflowing with a testimony of certitude. I select, as a specimen, the three following instances:—

Mark, *First*, the declaration of the general principle, as existing eternally in the divine nature: "Say unto them, as I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." (Ezek. xxxiii. 11.) Which of the wicked? Any one—every one—*thyself*. Whoever thou art, there is that great oath for it, that thy Creator is not willing that thou shouldst perish—it would be wonderful if He were—but will have thee to come unto the knowledge of the truth, and be saved. (1 Tim. ii. 4; 2 Peter iii. 9.) Mark, *Secondly*, the terms of our Lord's commission to the apostles: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to *every creature:*" to *yourself*, then; and not, *before* you, observe; but *to* you. Inasmuch as thou art a human being, thou hast a claim, by the divine bequeathment, on all preachers of the Apostolic succession, that they

hail thee with the glad tidings as designed for thyself. And if they belie their commission, and refuse to bespeak you with the assurance,—why, you are independent of them. As you would evince your manhood, and that you are not to be classed with the slaves of the Man of Sin, go and consult the "Bishop of souls" Himself. He is accessible to you as to them; Hear *Him*, as the word proceeds directly from his oracle. Nor "say in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above;) or who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) The WORD is *nigh* thee." (Rom. x. 6-8.)—Mark, *Thirdly*, the manner in which the apostles executed their commission.—That memorable day—the day of Pentecost, when under the plenitude of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the great model sermon was preached with such effect, "Repent," said Peter, and be baptized *every one of you*, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins. (Acts ii. 38.) And again, on the occasion of the second day of that great triumph, he repeats the *individualizing* of the thousands of his auditory: "God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away *every one of you* from his iniquities." (Acts iii. 26.) Feel you not, how that "every one" singles out yourself, as expressly as if your own name, John, or Mary, were inscribed in the testimony of proffered mercy? I wonder by what sophistry, less virulent than that which makes a man an infidel, the Old Deceiver could per-

suade you, that it is possible the "every one" may contain no portion for yourself. Assert the rights of your nature: as you are a man and not a devil, you are *one* whom the "*every* one" embraces in its all-benignant salutation. Christ is God's gift not only to the world, but to yourself: Use the gift, then, and be saved.*

Such are the three points of testimony, characteristic of the Bible system, if less than which be believed, there can be no regenerate consequence; but, if the whole of which be believed—believed, as when you believe any other report which you reckon trustworthy, then is your Regeneration certain. Let us recount the points: That you yourself are naturally in a perilous condition—that God has raised up his Son Jesus to be a Saviour, in his threefold character of Prophet, Priest, and King—and that you yourself are divinely welcomed to place yourself under his protection, guidance, and cherishing. Let your understanding be once convinced of the truth of this; and it is impossible that it should communicate such intelligence to your heart, without that heart undergoing an entire revolution. The great matter is to attain to the belief: that being secured, all the rest follows in natural and necessary order. Accordingly, under the next topic, I shall consider the Agency, by which this Faith is produced. For a brief space, however, I must suspend the argument to make a few practical deductions from what has been shewn to be the Instrumental Cause.

* See Appendix, C.

(1.) Though the Holy Spirit is the Agent, as will be presently illustrated, yet, since the Word is the only Instrument, how shall a man be regenerated, if he deny to the Spirit his sword, or refuse to come within its sweep? Yet this is done by all those who do not read the Word, and who absent themselves from its ministrations. It is true, that the Spirit may, and oftentimes does, assail unwilling men unawares, bringing the sword with Him: But I refer, at present, especially to those who have some impression of the necessity of being converted, or about whom friends are concerned. —Let the weapon be lying ready for being taken up to smite with; or, otherwise, let the seal be applied, and in a state of contact ready for being enstamped; or, changing the figure once more, let the mind be overspread with the *ideas* of the Word, that, when the Spirit passes by, He may, with the finger of his power, press them down, and cause them to take root *by faith.*—In this exercise of overspreading the mind with seed, take care that it be *genuine;* and not notions, and follies, and errors of your own imagination, or of the dictation of others, which the Wicked One may impress; for he also goes about seeking to produce faith—faith in falsehoods. Now you cannot be certain that the seed is thus genuine, unless you read and study the Word itself. Preachers of sermons, and authors of books may, either through mistake, or design, pervert the truth. Nevertheless, beware of the opposite extreme. Without the reading of books, and consultation with

christian brethren, and especially the help—I say not authoritative prescription, but help of the pastors of the church, your own independent, possibly undisciplined interpretation may miss or pervert the meaning. Therefore, pursue both methods: read and ponder the Word yourself, and take advantage of all helps for understanding it. This is alike the safe and dutiful medium of a genuine Protestantism.

(2.) Observe what is the use of the Sacraments. Since Regeneration, and its development in Sanctification, are effected only by the belief of the Truth, these sacraments can avail to salvation, only as their symbolical representations are another mode of presenting truth to the mind—another way of proclaiming the gospel: and, unless the result be the enlivening and strengthening of faith, their observance is the merest vanity.—No delusion can be more childish and fatal, than the fancy of some virtue being infused into that baptismal water, and eucharistic bread and wine, by priestly incantations, whereby they are endowed with a chemical efficacy for the salvation of the soul! What mockeries they be, as much they of Oxford, as those of Rome, for whose playing of their antics such exactions are made on the wealth of the nation! It is a priesthood fit only for barbarians. Civilization resents them as an insult and nuisance, and christianity disowns them with execrations. I, for one, feel no restraint of a spurious and treacherous charity—treacherous to the gospel—in denouncing them as guilty of hypocritically

practising imposture on the ignorant vulgar, and the many equally ignorant noble. There is a measure of candour in judging of them thus. It is a defence of them against the imputation of intellectual imbecility, for which it behoves them to be grateful, ambitious as they are of being accounted the most accomplished scholars, and particularly, the profoundest theologians! And yet, I suspect, we must have recourse to the imbecility, for explanation of part of the phenomenon. Commencing with the hypocrisy, they appear to have been delivered over by the judgment of God to the belief of their own lie. It is one of the ways in which his righteous government deals with the members of the great Apostacy. (2 Thess. ii. 11.) Let us beware of speaking flattering and charitable things of that Mystery of Iniquity which He has so deeply cursed.

(3.) In the same way that it is necessary to be careful of the views we take of the advantage of the sacraments, is there need for some being more guarded, than they usually are, in the language which they employ when speaking of the influence of Providential dispensations. The nature and amount of this influence will fall under consideration afterwards; but it is fit, that, here also, I tender some caution against such expressions as, that an acquaintance was converted by the death of his child, or some accident or disease which endangered the life of himself. Such things may have operated in the way of arresting his attention for the Word, or making a certain kind of preparation for its reception; but if

he be genuinely converted, it was the truth of the Word alone which produced the salutary change.

(4.) Unless the lively impression, or sudden suggestion, or vivid dream, be of such a nature, that you might have discovered the sentiment in the Word, at any time, in your waking hours, and calmest mood of study, place no reliance on it. Suppose you dreamed that Christ appeared to you, and that, saluting you with a benignant smile, He said, 'Be of good cheer, I have secured the pardon of thy sin,'—it would be proper to improve the dream to the end of a more serious consideration of our Lord's mediation, than you perhaps ever engaged in before. But, were you to build on it any confidence, that your sin is pardoned, your confidence would be a delusion, so far as this was made the foundation of it. The Word does not speak thus unqualifiedly to any man; and any dream which goes beyond its testimony cannot be of the Spirit's origination. That testimony contains the condition, "If thou believest, thou shalt be saved." Search thyself, therefore, of thy faith, and do not trust the dream.

I should be greatly misunderstood, were any one to suppose, that I design by these remarks to censure all attention to dreams whatsoever, as illusory and superstitious. On the contrary, I am persuaded that the Providence of the Spirit, if not his Inspiration also, according to a distinction which I shall afterwards illustrate, is largely concerned in their excitement and direction; and that the responsibility of thousands is

hereby greatly increased for a life both of greater holiness and greater joy. All my caution is directed against any reliance being placed on such as are not limited in sentiment to the exhibition of truths which theretofore existed in the written word.*

It may be necessary further, to explain here, that the preceding observations, limiting the Agency of the Spirit to the Instrumentality of the Word, have respect solely to the work of Regeneration. There are many other cases, I am well persuaded, in which, by other means—I doubt not even immediately, and without any means—that mind-moving Power influences, and incites, and restrains, and regulates, and controls, and turns the hearts of the wicked as well as the righteous, for serving the designs of the Governor of the world. For instance, when I pray, as I constantly do, that God would, by his Spirit, guide our Legislators to measures necessary for the prosperity of our Commonwealth, it would be a hopeless kind of praying—would it not?—if all my expectation depended on the manner in which they might be influenced to believe, and submit to the guidance of the Bible! My expectation rather is, that He will influence them with the salutary dread of the indignation of an abused people.

(5.) Even though some change of feeling and character should be clearly traceable to the Word, beware of presently concluding, that it must be the change of

* The subject is discussed at greater length in Discourses, Second Series, p. 187.

Regeneration. There are many changes produced by the belief of such parts of the Word as are common to it and other systems, and to the maxims of worldly prudence and decency; and which consequently might as well have been produced by the truth addressing the mind from those other quarters. Before the change be entitled to the name of Regeneration, it must be found, that its originating cause contained, as its principal element, the great characteristic truth of the Bible system, viz., the doctrine of a Redeemer crucified for our sins.

SECTION FOURTH.

THE ACTUATING AGENCY OF REGENERATION.

IN approaching the consideration of this august department of our subject, I exhort you, brethren, to a serious pondering of your Baptism. Imagine the scene, when the same ceremony was performed for yourselves, which you so frequently see performed for others—marking you with the seal of the covenant of Redemption, and pledging you to the worship of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alas, that there should be so many profaners of the covenant! whose conduct implies, that they bear the piety of their parents a grudge for having dedicated them to its faith; and who, in a manner, wash away the holy unction from their brows in the pollutions of the world.—Contrasted with such, I rejoice in the persuasion, that it is not a few of you, brethren, for whom it is a gratifying meditation, that notice was taken of them so early in the church of the Redeemer; and that from their infancy they have been numbered among the members of its sacred Institution.

Nevertheless, even among those who are entitled to the character of faithful, there is much reason for com-

plaining of the unfaithfulness of many, in the discharge of the obligations of this thrice holy covenant; and especially of that department of it, for which the present subject claims a particular consideration. It is gratifying to find, that there exists a large amount, not only of correct doctrine, but devout feeling, on the subjects of the supremacy and love of the Father, and the mediation of the Son; but how great and culpable is the abridgment which many make of the claims of their Baptism in respect of their acknowledgment of their obligations to the Holy Ghost, to whose gracious influence they are indebted for all those feelings of joy and holiness on which they felicitate themselves? There is less reason for any complaint on the score of formal confession made in prayer of the need of his Agency: but when the matter has been submitted to a scrutinizing examination, there is detected a melancholy want of *impression* in regard of it—a want of grateful ascription of reformations already effected, to his power and *love;* and a want of hope and calculation, that if we ask and wait we shall obtain an improvement of heart and character;—and, if possible, a still greater want of calculation, that we shall obtain from this heavenly source any amelioration for the disposition and conduct of our friends and neighbours.—Almost all the praise in the one case, and the dependence in the other, are bestowed and placed on argumentative and rhetorical sermons, and educational and missionary operations, and the reflections of prudence, and the arrival of the gravity

of years, and striking providences which have produced, or may produce, the enjoyed or desired reformation. There is a widely prevailing disposition and readiness in the church, as well as eagerness in the world, to accuse the doctrine of Divine Influence as being one of superstition and fanaticism; so that this blessed Spirit is denied his glory, and scarcely allowed a place in the scheme of salvation. Why need we wonder, that, in these circumstances, his operations should be greatly restrained, our own holiness and comfort marred and quenched, and our success in the conversion of others, so unsatisfactorily and painfully limited?

Before proceeding with a consideration of that modification of the doctrine which is peculiar to the christian system, there are two observations on the subject of divine influence in general, for which I solicit a few minutes' attention.—The *first* is, that so far as the state of opinion, among those who did not enjoy the light of Revelation, is admitted to be evidence, the doctrine is eminently one of reason. Not only did the poets of Greece and Rome constantly represent their heroes as being inspired by the gods, with the skill and courage requisite for their enterprises; but their philosophers also assigned such inspiration an important place in their ethical systems. Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, Seneca, Cicero, and others, make representations on this subject, the august character of which rebukes the impiety and poverty of spirit, not only of many of

our modern essayists, but of not a few of our professed scriptural sermonizers and theologians. They will blush should an expression escape them which may be construed as indicating their belief in any supernatural influence; whereas their shame lies in their being excelled in good philosophy by the ancient heathen.*

This introduces the *second* observation, viz., that, to question the doctrine of divine influence being exerted, either more or less directly, on the minds of men, involves scepticism on nearly the entire subject of God's Providence, and interdicts for the disputer all right of Prayer. When it expressly shuts out the divine government from the whole of the province of Mind, does not this infer exclusion from nearly the whole of the province of Matter also; since Matter is so extensively actuated and regulated by Mind; and in movements and arrangements in which the destiny of man is deeply involved? He who prays for daily bread, when he does not acknowledge his dependence on the manner in which God may control the minds of statesmen in their legislation, and the minds of his fellow-merchants in respect of honesty, and the minds of all his neighbours in respect of charity, acts as inconsistently, as if he prayed for that bread, when yet

* Bonus vir sine Deo nemo est. An potest aliquis, supra fortunam, nisi ab ILLO adjutus, resurgere? ILLE dat consilia magnifica et erecta.—SENECA. *There is no man* good *without God. Can any one rise superior to fortune without His aid? It is He who communicates principles of magnanimity and fortitude.*

Nemo vir magnus, sine aliquo Divino afflatu, unquam fuit.—CICERO. *Never yet has there been a* great *man, without some Divine influence.*

he doubted if there were any divine Providence which regulated sunshine and rain.—Meditation on this would increase the earnestness of some who already pray aright; and altogether abolish the praying of others, who have only a form of prayer; through the manner in which they would be convicted of inconsistency, in praying for any mentionable favour of whatever kind, so long as they refused to believe in God's government and inspiration of the world of Mind.

In proceeding to consider the peculiarity of christian doctrine on the subject, the Personality of the Holy Ghost claims the first share of our attention.—For the statement and elucidation of the various arguments by which this Personality is demonstrated, I must, as in a former case, and for the same reasons, refer to the pleadings and illustrations of others, which happily are abundant; and satisfy myself with the following general reflection on the subject.

When the doctrine of the Holy Ghost is resolved merely into the doctrine of the *active energy* of the Eternal Father, though we may not be warranted to deny, that, with such insufficient views, there can be experienced even a considerable amount of devout dependence on heavenly aid; yet, since the insufficiency is greatly dishonouring to the Holy Spirit, it can scarcely escape being visited with a degree of divine displeasure. Accordingly, we find a comparative weakness and barrenness in the confidence, wherever the

Personality is not realised. Witness the case of Robert Hall in the earlier part of his life.—Independently of any such chastening visitation, the barrenness of feeling is a natural consequence of the rejection, or oblivousness of the doctrine. One who merely speculates on the subject might say, What confidence can be more satisfactory than that of him who relies on the energy and influence of the Father? Is not that energy omnipotent? And what can exceed omnipotence as an object of trust? But the objection would not be less philosophical, than opposed to christian experience. In the finiteness of our minds, there is a tendency to limit God, and conceive of Him as we do of man, that much work will perplex and burden Him. The devout christian, therefore, feels it to be of great benefit, that there are three distinct objects of Power and Mercy revealed for the contemplation of his faith—all united in the most perfect harmony for his salvation; but having different parts assigned them severally for execution, according to the terms of their covenant for the redemption of men.—Let us beware, then, of dismissing from our consideration the doctrine more immediately before us, as being one the argument of which we have sufficiently mastered; but, with arrested attention, let us meditate, that the Holy Ghost, into whose name we have been baptized, is a Person of divine power and love, without the individual exertion of whose energies, there is no Regeneration, nor subsequent Sanctification of the soul.

The way being thus prepared for the consideration of the main subject, I shall conduct the investigation by the rule of these two questions: 1st, When Regeneration is ascribed to the authorship of the Holy Ghost, What would warrant the ascription in the common use of language? and 2dly, What is necessary to exhaust the representation of Scripture, or to satisfy the demand of its terms?

I remark, then, in the First place, that the circumstance, of the Instrumentality by which Regeneration is effected having been provided by the Spirit, is sufficient to warrant the ascription of the praise of the work to Him, in good vernacular expression. It has been already illustrated at large, that the Bible is the Instrument of the change. But that Bible is of his divine authorship. The holy men through whom it has been communicated, spake only as He moved them. (2 Peter i. 21.) Even the sayings of Christ, acting in his prophetic character, proceeded from the influences of the Spirit, poured out and resting on Him. (John iii. 34; Isaiah xi. 2.) And afterwards, before these sayings were recorded by the Evangelists, their memories were quickened and corrected by the same inspiration. (John xiv. 26.)

Suppose, now, for the sake of illustration, that a student of physical science had obtained an enlightenment of his mind by the reading of Sir Isaac Newton's great work 'The Principia,' he would not be chargeable with a violation of correct expression were he to

say, that he once entertained very absurd notions respecting the order and arrangements of Nature, but that Sir Isaac corrected them—while yet he had never enjoyed any personal intercourse with the Master-Philosopher. In like manner, had the Bible, either when read, or expounded and enforced by the eloquence of man, produced, by the inherent power of its truths, the great moral revolution and reformation of the soul, Regeneration would, even thus, have been ascribable with propriety to the Holy Ghost; since it was He who originally made it that sharp and powerful instrument which it had approved itself to be.

All this I freely admit, in answer to the first question which regulates our inquiry; but, there is the second, in answer to which, when I contend, that the view does not exhaust or satisfy the demands of the representation of the Scripture, it is sufficient to remark, that it does not admit of *praying* for the help of the Spirit; than which no duty is more frequently and explicitly inculcated. On the principle, that He is the author of Regeneration only in the sense of his having formed its Instrument, the Word, all his work for the conversion of men was completed nearly eighteen hundred years ago; so that prayer for his present help is preposterous, unless it be presented with the desire and expectation, that He will vouchsafe some new Revelation for the enlargement of the canon of the Scripture.—Many who, at the commencement of Whitfield's mission for the Second Reformation of England, tolerated his

proclamation of the doctrine of Justification by Faith, rose in arms against him, when he proceeded to insist on the doctrine of Regeneration by the power of the Holy Ghost. Among these was the Bishop of London, for the time being, who had previously published a work in defence of the doctrine of the Trinity. When his attack on Whitfield appeared, some one remarked, that his Lordship's creed contained the doctrine of the existence of the Holy Ghost, but that he appeared to be at a great loss for any use to which to turn it.* The satire is applicable with equally caustic power to many among ourselves. Professing, as they do, that they believe in the Holy Ghost,—What work—what blessing, we ask, do they expect from his power and mercy, since they are of opinion, that the appliance of the truth of the Scripture, in the common way, by the agency of man, is adequate to the work of Regeneration?

I therefore observe, in the Second place, that Regeneration may with propriety be ascribed to the Agency of the Holy Ghost, inasmuch as, in addition to his having originally framed the Instrument of it, He continues to produce and bestow *circumstances* which are favourable for its operation.—Resuming the illustration of a man's philosophical enlightenment,—suppose, that Sir Isaac Newton had not only composed 'The Principia,' but, that he had founded a college with his

* For the original, but somewhat profane, turn of the anecdote, see Philip's Life of Whitfield.

wealth, provided lecturers, and furnished accommodation for the retired and undisturbed study of those who might betake themselves to this retreat;—that he had, moreover, employed a number of messengers, who should perambulate the country, pressing the subject on the attention of the public, and giving the ignorant a cordial welcome to enter and partake of the instruction; —and suppose, further, that he himself, living and active, superintended all the arrangements—then, even more emphatically than in the former case, might the students, after their minds were illuminated, say, that Sir Isaac had effected their philosophical conversion, though he himself had never personally given them a lesson.—In like manner, there is a *providence* of the Spirit, which, irrespectively of his *inspiration*, afterwards to be considered, would be sufficient to warrant the ascription to Him of the authorship of Regeneration; supposing that the Word, with favourable circumstances for its operation, had been adequate to the whole of the work.

It is somewhat remarkable, that, when this Providence of the Spirit is widely acknowledged in memoirs, and in the narrations of Christian experience, and in funeral prayers and sermons, so little account should be taken of it in the systematic discussion of our subject. I shall, therefore, extend my remarks on it a little further than I might otherwise have done.

Observe, then, that its acts, like those of the common Providence by which the world is governed, are dis-

tinguishable as General and Special: General, when the favourable circumstances are bestowed on classes of men, or the world at large; Special, when a peculiar treatment is given to individuals.

To the General Providence we ascribe such arrangements as these; the translation of the Word into the vernacular languages; the invention of printing; the Reformation; the Commonwealth; the Revolution; the institution of Bible and Missionary Societies; the abolition of slavery; the permission of the conquest of India; the opening of China, and many things similar. In these events or arrangements the Spirit was at work, as the Great Regenerator, producing favourable circumstances for the operation of that Word which He originally formed, as the instrument of conversion. And an exercise of lively interest it is for a devout mind, to read the history of the world in a spirit watching for the display which the Holy Ghost makes of his power, in preparing and providing circumstances which shall be favourable for the action of the Bible. Little do the statesmen of the world think, that their measures are controlled, and that they themselves are frequently actuated in their deliberations, by One whose great design is to provide a field for the operation of that slighted Book—slighted by the very men who are used as instruments for prospering its cause! Wherein is it wonderful? Think ye, that that Spirit who rules the world has any respect for their Charters, or Acts of Parliament, or Bulls, or Ukases, when they fall into

antagonism with his Own Book? If milder measures have been resisted, He will commission a Napoleon, or let loose the mob, to tear their statutes to pieces, and commit them to the flames, that that Book may have free course to be glorified. Dreadful Book! Who that ever stood in thy way escaped destruction? Yea, rather, Book of Blessing! Thou art the child of the Eternal Spirit; and who that carries thee in his bosom need fear the world? When he cherishes thee, thy Father will cherish him.

Besides such arrangements as those which have been already noticed, there are others of a less extensive nature, which are still referrible to the General Providence: the rearing of a place of worship in a locality formerly destitute; the appointment of a minister of peculiar gifts to a particular church, in a particular city—the mission of Dr. Chalmers, for instance, to Glasgow; the publication of a particular book—of the Shorter Catechism, of the Pilgrim's Progress, or Matthew Henry's Commentary. These, and similar acts, belong to that General Superintendence, by which the Spirit provides advantageous conditions for the operation of the Word, through means for its communication being furnished, prejudices removed, and general favourable impressions produced, among large classes and communities of men.

Interesting, however, though the meditation is on the General Providence of the Spirit, meditation on his

Special Providence is more impressive still—making arrangements in respect of the parents of whom men should be born, of the teachers by whom they should be educated, of the companions with whom they should be associated, of the ministers under whose pastoral care they should be placed, of the books to which they should have access, of the trades or professions to which they should be assigned, of the marriage alliances which they should be induced to contract—arrangements of loss of wealth, of loss of character, of loss of children—arrangements of threatenings of death.

All the foregoing enumerations might have been greatly extended; but they will suffice, as they stand, for an explanation of my meaning: and I now call attention to the following general remark on the *special* arrangements:—that, when some receive one part of them, and others another, the Providence of the Spirit has respect in its distributions to the particular mental constitution, states of education, habits, dispositions, etc., of the different individuals.—One idolizes wealth; the death of his child would affect him but slightly; he is therefore made a bankrupt: another, who would feel this less painfully, is bereaved of his favourite daughter, and smitten in the direction in which his heart is most sensitive. A third, whose idol is his own person, is smitten with disease—with sores and decrepitude.—Two young men have met by the way, the one leaving the city for a neighbouring village;

the other leaving the village for the city. Both of them have only in view the improvement of their worldly circumstances, being under a guidance they wot not of. In exchanging dwelling-places, they exchange churches also. The city minister is argumentative and denunciatory; the village one contemplative, and tender in his appeals. The *quondam* city hearer is like its minister, a man of disputations; and every Sabbath his combative propensities were roused to give the sermon battle. He, once of the village, is easy and sluggish in his temperament; and wont to escape the weariness of church hours by betaking himself to sleep: but now, under the different ministrations of the city, he has been awaked as by the trump of judgment. And yet, no less singular has been the experience of the pugilist. With his head set like a bull's for the combat, he waited as usual for an argument, when lo! a pathetic exclamation has smitten him unawares on his unguarded heart, to prostrate him in the dust.

The inquiry now presses, what is the nature and amount of good effected by the Providence of the Spirit, before the time of Inspiration has yet arrived? All unite in saying, that a narrow escape with life from some accident, for instance, may be made to operate for *arresting attention* to the interests of eternity. But the present question, one of the most critical in theology, relates to the *disposition* which such causes may produce for receiving the Word. Observe, then, that

we are safe in answering thus far, that much *negative preparation* is often effected in this manner, through the removing of obstacles. That wealth, that child, that blooming complexion, engrossed the whole attention away from the Word; perhaps occasioned disgust of it: but their removal has so far cleared the ground for its operation. And the argumentative, or eloquent, or philanthropic sermon has convinced him who was formerly a mocker, that christianity may be entertained by a philosophic, literary, liberal, and humane mind—qualifications which he once thought appertained only to impiety!—and that the faith of Jesus is not after all that superstitious, vulgar, and scorn-worthy system which heretofore he supposed it to be. This conviction may proceed so far as to make him ill at ease with the imagination that it is possibly true.—Less than this, and it is not a little, both reason and facts permit us, if they do not necessitate us, to represent as producible by what I have denominated the Providence of the Spirit, in distinction from his Inspiration.—The difficulty lies in deciding, whether any thing of a *positive nature* has been effected by this providential preparation. Now, I see no danger in admitting, that there *has;* so long as nothing of a holy character is attributed to the predisposition thus generated, and all the holiness is reserved for being produced by the belief of the Word, when the Inspiration consummates the work. For example; who shall challenge as unscriptural the following representation?—that, by the death of a favourite child, the Spirit's

Providence had to some extent predisposed the mind of a heathen parent for the reception of the gospel; against the time when the missionary should arrive with his proclamation of the doctrine of immortality, so as to excite his hope that he might yet see his child, over whom he had wept as lost. Such a representation, instead of derogating from the honour of the Spirit as the author of conversion, appears to me to be an illustrating and magnifying of it.

To such an extent is there predisposing influence in those natural causes, that, provided it is granted they are ordered and arranged by the Spirit, I, for one, would bring no bitter charge of heresy against the man who might believe and contend, that, in connection with what are called the external and internal Evidences of the divine original of the Word, they are sufficient for the production of faith; and that no person ever receives any other influence. He who makes admissions this length can consistently pray for the guidance of the Spirit being vouchsafed both to himself and others; and render thanksgiving gratefully for all the holiness which may result.—Nevertheless, I regard him as being guilty of a great error, by which the Spirit is dishonoured, and his own faith impoverished. The convicting him of this, is the task which the course of the argument now prescribes.

When I proceed, in the Third place, to shew that Regeneration is ascribed to the Agency of the Holy Ghost, especially in respect of his producing Faith by

Inspiration, the argument must, from the nature of the case, consist principally in citing Scriptural testimonies: but it will be useful to shew, in the first instance, the *previous probability*, that there is need for much more than the advocates of the last-mentioned theory admit. —They are accustomed to remonstrate in the following manner:—Are not the arguments for religious truth as strong as those for political truth, for example; and do they not admit of being pleaded with, at least, as forcible appeal, to the passions and affections? Why, then, represent something more as being necessary for producing conviction in the one case, than in the other, and especially when we admit the doctrine of a predisposing Providence?

(1.) I reply, first, that there is in Bible truth so much of what is strange—so much of what is unlike any thing which men are commonly exercised in believing—so much of what seems previously improbable, that much more than common argumentation seems necessary for convincing the mind of it. That common argumentation, by the array and enforcement of the Evidences, already noticed, may silence an objector; but this falls much short of prevailing with him to believe. It is admitted, that the friends of truth, when recounting the causes of infidelity, are wont to ascribe too much to the offence which the understanding takes at the mysteries of the Bible; whereas Christ himself represents the great secret to lie in the offence which the heart takes at its holiness. (John iii. 19.) Nevertheless,

it is indisputable, that these mysteries and wonders, demand of faith an intellectual effort of no ordinary difficulty.

(2.) I reply, secondly, according to what has just been intimated, that not only are the truths of the gospel most strange to the natural intellect, but that they are most offensive to the natural heart:—offensive to its pride, on account of the charges of its depravity which they contain, and the representation which they make of the necessity of such a self-renouncing dependence on the mercy and charity of Another, as the Cross of the Redeemer prescribes;—but especially offensive to its corrupt propensities and habits, on account of the peculiar and stringent morality which they inculcate—of devotion in the worship of God, of benevolence in intercourse with mankind, of personal purity, and of heavenly mindedness. It is surely unnecessary, that I should stop to illustrate the universally acknowledged principle, that evil passions disqualify the understanding for the perception of the truth. Even the heathen moralist taught, that "wickedness perverts the judgment, and makes men err with respect to practical principles; so that no one can be wise and judicious who is not good." [Aristotle.] With what mockery and contempt will not pride, and avarice, and lust, repel those arguments which contain for the virtuous the clearness of a demonstration?

The objectors, in the present question, refer, as we have seen, to the inherent force of arguments for political

truth, as illustrative of the force of those for religious truth. Well, how few ardent political minds have been converted to the opposite views? And in the greater number of instances in which change has occurred, was it not effected either by base bribery, to which there is nothing correspondent in the spiritual case, or, by a species of physical compulsion, rather than by rational conviction—by the threatening of popular insurrection, or of national bankruptcy, or by the failure of the crops of harvest, making it impossible for them to retain their old opinions, or at least to pursue their old policy? And yet, the prejudices are greatly stronger in the religious question than they are in the political one. In the latter, it is only a small part of a man's being which rises in opposition; whereas, in the former, the entire force of his corrupt nature is arrayed in hostile defiance. Nor is there any hope of change being found for him, in that quarter, where it was found for the politician, whom the course of events compelled to surrender his old opinions as impracticable. The correspondency to this will be the Day of Judgment, when the opportunity for conversion has passed away for ever. The Providential work of the Spirit may, it is true, allay some prejudices, and produce some favourable prepossessions; but, important as this consideration is, taken by itself, yet, in comparison with the work to be executed, it is but as the removing of a few shovelfuls for the reducing of a mountain.

(3.) I reply, thirdly, that we can easily conceive of

the *possibility* of much more being done, than the objectors admit, consistently both with man's instrumentality on the one hand, and his responsibility on the other; and therefore argue for the previous *probability* of its being done, both in the way of divine mercy, and in the way of the Spirit taking to himself the glory of the entire work.

In illustration of the possibility, and consequently of the probability, of more being done, I resume and carry forward the supposition of the case of a man enlightened in science by Sir Isaac Newton.—'The Principia' having been indited, and the college instituted, suppose, that all the length the professors carried the pupil was teaching him the nomenclature of angles and curves, the theorem to be demonstrated, and the order of the demonstration; so that he could recite it accurately, yet without perceiving the geometrical sequence, or feeling its force: but, that there was an inner chamber into which he was subsequently introduced, where sat Sir Isaac himself, under whose personal prelections the demonstration instantly began to shine, and waxed brighter and brighter, till, as he arrived at the conclusion, the pupil exclaimed, "I see it now, I see it"—the sense would at last be perfect in which he would celebrate the great philosopher, as the author of his scientific illumination.

I do not, by any means, propose this representation as being throughout analogous to the process of spiritual conversion. On the contrary, there are several respects

in which the two cases exhibit a direct contrast:* but just as the parables of Scripture do not admit of being interpreted by the canon of there being a correspondency at all points betwixt the historical narrative and the spiritual doctrine; so, all that is proposed in the present instance is, that, in answer to the second question by which our inquiry is ruled, the illustration be applied in respect of the general conclusion—that *direct personal* teaching of the Spirit, in convincing and persuading the mind of the truth, must be taken into the account, before the representations of the Scripture on the subject be exhausted;—that, corresponding to the fancied inner chamber of the philosopher, there is truly a sanctuary of the Holy Ghost into which a man must be introduced, where he may be "taught of God" before he shall believe.

* It will be of importance to explain the principal points of difference.—Observe, then, *first*, that, whereas Sir Isaac might supplement deficiencies in The Principia,—the argument of the Bible is perfect. *Secondly*, that, whereas the teaching of Sir Isaac would be of the same nature as that of the professors, and could be superior only as to quality, —the teaching of the Spirit differs essentially in its mode of conviction from all other teaching whatever. *Thirdly*, that, whereas in the scientific case, the pupil, when only under the professors, might confide in the demonstration as true, though he did not comprehend it, and use the deduced *formula* for profitable practical ends,—in the spiritual case it is, on the contrary, the *formula* which the inquirer does not believe, till spiritually enlightened. Previously to that he has no confidence in the integrity of the demonstration.—It does not affect the case, as being merely an illustration by way of supposition, but it is noticeable as one of the curiosities of literature, that Sir Isaac acknowledged that there were several of his followers who taught his philosophy more luminously than he could do himself; and beautified for him his own demonstrations.

The previous probability having been illustrated, it will not be necessary to extend the citation and exposition of the scriptural evidence so far as might otherwise have been proper. I shall therefore satisfy myself with the following selection.

Matthew xvi. 13-17. When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon-Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. *Compared with*

1 John v. 1. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.

Observe, *first*, that the revelation made to Peter was not the discovery of a new truth by miraculous *gift*, but the manifesting of an old truth by *grace*, so as to produce faith in it—such grace as all need and many receive at the present day.—Observe, *secondly*, that though it be of less importance to determine accurately what is meant by "flesh and blood," yet, when some say that it means the Doctors of the Law, whose authority Peter had renounced; or his own carnal prejudices, the perverting influence of which he had resisted—What need, I ask, was there for declaring so solemnly that such was not the source of his belief? It would have been as pertinent to say, that the revelation had not been made to him by the wolves of the forest, or the waves of the sea. But there was the greatest pertinency

in saying, that he had not learned it by his own *natural* and unassisted powers of discernment and reflection.—The interpretation of Dr. Barnes is the most singular of all: by "flesh and blood," he understands, "the human nature of Christ!"—Observe, *thirdly*, that, when any one says, that the revelation by the Father consisted merely in his having bestowed on Peter *favourable circumstances* for believing the truth, such an interpretation is not the natural sense of the expressions; and that to this natural sense, sound criticism, yea, honesty, demands of us that we adhere, unless we be forced from it, by its being shewn to be contradictory either of reason, or of the analogy of faith.—I remark, further, that, on this principle, Judas had been favoured with as much divine teaching as Peter had. Objectors will possibly ask, in reply, what is monstrous in this idea? and was it not necessary that the two should receive equal privileges, before the one could be justly treated as culpable, when he resisted that evidence which was sufficient for the other? To the latter part of the question I answer, No; since the principle is most equitable, that to him that hath, through improvement of former advantages, more should be given: and to the former part, that it is very monstrous indeed, to represent the Spirit of God as having no dealings with the mind of a saint, different either in nature or degree, from those which He has with the mind of a reprobate. I, therefore, maintain, that the evidence of the passage is clear for a direct personal operation of the Spirit in the production of faith.

1 Corinthians iii. 6, 7. I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So, then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

There is observable here, first, the favourable circumstances of the united dialectics of Paul, and rhetoric of Apollos: and shall we conclude that the work of God, for giving the increase, consisted in nothing more than the bestowing of *additional* favourable circumstances? As in the preceding instance, the natural sense of the expression is, that divine influence caused the preaching of the word to be fruitful, through faith; and by that sense we must abide, till sufficient reason be given for departing from it, and adopting another less direct.

2 Corinthians x. 4. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds.

It was once generally received as a canon of interpretation, that, in Hebrew dialect, the names of God are often used epithetically for expressing greatness or excellence: that "mountains of God," for instance, signify "great mountains." (Psalm xxxvi. 6.) On this ground Macknight contends, that, in the passage at present under consideration, the words translated "mighty through God," signify nothing more than "exceeding powerful." Glassius, however, had long previously exposed the unsoundness of the criticism. The common version, therefore, is approved correct.—That the weapons themselves are not, as the same commentator represents, the miraculous *gifts* with which

the apostles were endowed, but the *truths* which they preached, few, I think, will question, when the nature of the work accomplished is considered, as described in the context: "casting down imaginations," etc.—It further appears evident, that, though these weapons are "powerful" (Heb. iv. 12), as having been originally *formed* by God; yet, is their "might" represented in the present case as lying in their *application*.—The question is, therefore, once more, limited to the point —if they are made efficient through God's providing favourable circumstances for their operation; or, through a direct personal agency wafting and urging forward and homeward, by his divine breath, those arrows which apostles have discharged. As before, we maintain that the latter is the natural force of the terms, by which we must be constrained till it is shewn to violate the system of the gospel.

Ephesians ii. 8. By grace are ye saved through faith, and *that* not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

In the original Greek the pronoun corresponding to "that" is of the neuter gender, whereas the noun corresponding to "faith" is of the feminine.—From this it has been argued, that it is not the *faith*, but the *salvation*, which is declared to be the gift of God. Accordingly, Dr. Macknight translates, "this affair (of salvation by faith) is not of yourselves," etc. *This affair* is now rather fashionable with critics;* but

* The criticism is, however, by no means of recent origin; and it is remarkable, that, when Calvin adopts it, Whitby rejects it. The

hear Dr. Doddridge on it, first, as he expresses himself in his two Sermons on Regeneration :—

"I am sensible, that some endeavour to invalidate and supersede all this part of the argument, by giving another turn to this last clause, referring it in general to our salvation by faith; as if it had been said, 'our being saved by grace through faith (as I have just now said) is not of ourselves, but it is the gift of God.' But I apprehend, that the impartial reader would not be willing to allow this interpretation, which makes the latter clause a mere repetition of what was said before, and a repetition of it in less proper and expressive words. None could imagine, that our being saved by faith, was of ourselves; or that we could ourselves appoint such a way of salvation, which was indeed fixed so long before we had a being. But faith being really our own act, it was highly pertinent to observe, that the excellency of this act is not to be arrogated to ourselves, but is to be ascribed to God. All that are acquainted with the genius of the original must acknowledge, that this is a construction which it will very fairly admit."

This is sufficiently convincing: but by the time he

rejection of it by the one is a stronger evidence against it, than the adoption of it by the other is an evidence in its favour: inasmuch as Whitby was much less likely than Calvin to allow any thing to escape him, which, with any respect to his character as a critic, he could lay under contribution for the support of his system. When Whitby's Arminianism was ever awake and watchful, it is notorious, that as a commentator, Calvin was a lax Calvinist. Poole, in his *Synopsis*, stigmatizes him, *Judaizans Calvinus!*

comes to write The Family Expositor, he expresses himself still more peremptorily:—

"Some explain the clause 'and this not of yourselves,' as if it were only a repetition of what was said before—that the *constitution*, which made faith the way of salvation, was not of their own appointment, but God's. But this is making the apostle guilty of a flat tautology, for which there is no occasion. Taking the clause as we explain it, that is, as asserting the agency of divine grace in the production of faith, as well as in the constitution of the method of salvation by it, the thought rises with great spirit.—As for the apostle's using the word *touto* in the neuter gender to signify 'faith,' the thing he had just before been speaking of, there are so many similar instances to be found in the Scripture, that one would wonder, how it were possible for any judicious critics to have laid so much stress on this as they do, in rejecting what seems, beyond all comparison, the weightiest and most natural interpretation."

This defence of the doctrine, that faith, as well as salvation, is of grace, I am bold to say will never be answered. At all events it has not been answered hitherto. The *Recensio Synoptica*, with all its parade of scholarship and array of authorities, has not ventured to grapple with it.* It will be observed, that Doddridge

* At Philippians ii. 13. Bloomfield, with much ignorance of the system of the Calvinistic writers (for who of them ever denied that there is a very important sense in which a Christian works out his own salvation?) but with more presumption, for the gratuitous attack no

expresses himself on this occasion with a warmth and confidence in the correctness of his opinion, which are not usual with him. The case warrants it all and more. For the apostle to have called his readers to mark carefully, that that which is by *grace* is not of a man's self, but a *gift*, would have been the perpetrating not only of a "flat tautology," but, an absurd jingle of synonymes.

Some have said, that it is of little importance to have it determined, which of the interpretations is the correct one, since "faith," being united in the description with "salvation" would share in the character of *gift*, though the ascription of that character were determined in favour of the general benefit. That this is a mistake may be inferred from the principles of that class of theologians, to which those men principally belong,

the sincerity of the most candid divine, perhaps, who ever graced the Church of Christ, accuses Doddridge of having "pursued a most disingenuous course," in the interpretation of that passage. How much it is to be lamented, that the indignant censurer has not favoured us with his own explanation of the manner in which a Christian works out his salvation; that in his honest orthodoxy we might have found an antidote to Doddridge's "dexterous, but not creditable," "unwarrantable," "disingenuous" heresy!—I retort no charge of moral perverseness; but I do accuse it, in the first place, of being a discreditable specimen of exegetic ability, that in the case of the passage more particularly under consideration, he makes no attempt to meet Dr. Doddridge's exposure of the insufficiency of that interpretation which he has adopted; and, in the second place, of its being a discreditable specimen of scholarship, when he denies that, Philippians i. 28, to which Doddridge refers, contains an instance of the grammatical usage accurately in point.—Although there were no such instance producible, the supplemental *pragma* would have been as referrible to the "faith" as to the "salvation:" and good scholarship decides for that application which at once prefers the immediate antecedent, avoids a vain tautology, and harmonizes with the analogy of faith.

who endeavour to deprive the "faith" of the direct and explicit testimony. Accordingly, it is obvious, on reflection, that salvation could with sufficient propriety be called a gift, though the faith which accepts of it were the unprompted and unassisted act of a man's own mind: so that it is of great moment, in advocating the doctrine of a salvation which is *entirely* of grace, to have the "gift" of our text specifically determined for "faith," as Doddridge has so conclusively done.

This, however, is not permitted to settle the question. Macknight, following Grotius and Whitby, contends, that, though the "that," the *touto*, were legitimately construed in connexion with "faith," it would necessarily imply nothing more, than that God had furnished the matter to be believed, and also an opportunity for believing it: and he refers, for evidence, to Philip. i. 9, where the same apostle says, "unto you it is given, on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for his sake." But to represent the gift bestowed on the Philippians as consisting merely in an opportunity to believe, is evidently a begging of the question, which we do not grant. Although, however, it were admitted that, if the Scripture had not elsewhere given a more explicit utterance on the subject, such an explanation might have been received as satisfactory in the case of the passage in the epistle to the Philippians; yet, I contend, that there is a specialty in the case of that in the epistle to the Ephesians, which cannot be be resolved on this principle. Think of the apostle

calling on these Ephesians to observe carefully, that the Gospel system, and the mission of its ministers to their country were "not of themselves!" Could anything have been more preposterous? I therefore conclude, in the language of Doddridge, that, to understand the clause as asserting the personal and direct agency of divine grace in the production of faith, "is beyond all comparison the weightiest and most natural interpretation."

1 Corinthians vi. 19. Know ye not, that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?—*Compared with,*

Ephesians ii. 22. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit.

In connection with,

Ephesians iii. 14-16. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—that He would grant you —to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man. *And again at* ver. 20. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the Power that worketh in us,—unto Him be glory, etc.—*Compared with,*

Philippians ii. 14. It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

The reason of connecting the consideration of the In-dwelling of the Spirit with that of his Inward-working is obvious. He dwells within, that He may be present to work within.—Both of the classes of passages quoted refer, like some others, indeed, which have been already reviewed, rather to the work of Sanctification. But, as that work is the development of Regeneration, and is effected by the same means, that which illustrates the process must equally illustrate the

incipient act. Regeneration is accomplished when the Spirit *enters* the soul to make it his *dwelling-place*, for carrying forward the work of Sanctification.

The doctrine of the In-dwelling of the Holy Ghost, in the soul of a saint, is at once so important, and so strenuously controverted, that I find it impossible to do its treatment justice within such limits as would preserve for the reader the perception of continuity in the illustration of the general subject. I must, therefore, consign the discussion to an Appendix;* and in this place satisfy myself with making a simple appeal to the common sense of the inquirer,—if there be not expressions in the passages quoted, which neither the endowment of miraculous gifts, nor the bestowal of favourable circumstances, will ever approach with an appearance of explanation; and, if anything less will satisfy them, than the belief of the personal presence and work of the Holy Ghost in the inner man, producing and nourishing that faith, through which Christ dwells in the heart, as an image of admiration, love, confidence, and loyal submission.

Having adduced so much of the Scriptural evidence as I regard sufficient to prove, that there is an immediate or direct personal action of the Spirit on the soul in producing Regeneration, many will eagerly ask, what is the mode of his operation? But I protest against the

* See Appendix D.

question. How is it that any one should expect, that I, or my brethren in the ministry of the Gospel, should make that plain which Christ himself has declared to be an inexplicable mystery. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," he has said, "and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." With these words before us, both he who asks, and he who attempts a full resolution of the difficulty, act a profane part: and the very circumstance of any one having made out a clear and perspicuous case is a proof, that "the light which is in him is darkness." Nevertheless, it is lawful for us to inquire, *what* is done, and what is *not* done; and, in respect of the mode of operation, to endeavour to determine where the point of mystery may exactly lie.

Reverting, then, to what was formerly illustrated, let it be carefully borne in mind, that the great problem is, the gaining of belief in the Word. "The Spirit applieth to us the Redemption purchased by Christ," say the Westminster divines, "by *working faith* in us:" so that the question is simply, what is done by the Spirit in producing faith?

(1.) In reply, I observe, in the first place, that the common representation is, that that which the Spirit does in addition to, and in help of, the argumentation of man, consists in one, or other, or both of these two things, distinguished in the schools as *subjective*, and *objective* illumination;—the subjective, being the bright-

ening of the Mind which discerns; the objective, the brightening of the Truth to be discerned. The author of the Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation has illustrated the distinction as follows: "The soul might be quickened to see and feel the power of the truth; or, by the Spirit the truth might be rendered powerful to affect the soul. The wax might be softened to receive the impression; or the seal heated; or a power exerted upon it to make the impression on the wax; or both might be done, and still the result would be the same." —(Chap. xviii.)

The supposition of there being any *objective* illumination in the matter has been refuted by many, but by none more eloquently and forcibly than Dr. Chalmers, in his Lectures on the Romans (Lect. i.), and Dr. Payne, in his Lectures on Divine Sovereignty, etc. (Lect. xxiii.) And yet both of them have expressed themselves too unqualifiedly. In their own persons, they are eminent instances of men being employed by the *Providence* of the Spirit for the brightening of the Truth, by their arguments and illustrations. But when the point is argued in this form—that, in his *Inspiration*-work, the Spirit makes no addition to the truth already recorded in the Word, then is the demonstration clear, that the illumination is not of an objective, but entirely of a subjective nature—effected by a direct operation on the mind itself.

But no sooner have some discarded the notion of objective illumination in its more palpable form—of the

Spirit making any addition to the truth of the Word, than they take it up in another, and are found speaking of the manner in which the Spirit gives *force* to the Word. This language, I allow, admits of some defence, when, in popular discourse, it is used to express the difference betwixt the effect of a mere knowledge of what the Word contains, and the effect of a belief of it. Nevertheless, it is not strictly logical, and has somewhat of a dangerous tendency, to withdraw the attention from the direct act on the soul. Dr. Payne's observations here are forcible, and worthy of transcription. "Take for illustration," he says, "a case of instantaneous conversion. The Gospel exerts no influence over the mind one hour—a mighty and uncontrollable influence the next. To ascribe this difference to some additional power imparted to the Gospel, is to lose sight of the difference which exists between physical and moral causes; and to confound the influence of the former with that of the latter. Additional power may be imparted to a physical cause, which operates by contact and impulse. A battering ram, when brought into gentle contact only with the walls of a citadel, would effect no breach; but give to it the momentum which the strength of fifty or a hundred men can impart, and it becomes irresistible. It is, I have no doubt, the influence of some such material analogy which has led to the mistake against which I now contend."—(P. 363.)

(2.) It having been shewn that the Inspiration of

the Spirit does not affect the Word but the Mind, I observe, in the second place, that it does not consist, as some imagine and affirm, in the communication of a supernatural power to discern the *meaning* of the Word: so that when the meaning is discerned, the internal evidence persuades the mind of its truth.—Without encumbering the reply to this representation with a statement of all the objections which lie against it, I satisfy myself with affirming, that it is widely refuted by the *fact*.—FIRST, unregenerated men, unhappily convicted of being such by the clearest evidence, have, as critics, expositors, and dogmatic theologians, produced what regenerated men, possessed, of course, of the alleged supernatural discernment, not only acknowledge to be a fair, full, and accurate account of the Christian system; but, which they prize as a valuable assistance of their own perception of the truth. According to the hypothesis, this would be an aiding of the illuminated by the blind.—SECONDLY, regenerated men have discerned nothing in the sacred text, at least they have as yet published nothing, which, provided they did not write so mystically as to be unable to divine the meaning themselves, unregenerated men did not comprehend as fully and clearly as the regenerated brethren.—And, THIRDLY, not only have unregenerated men elucidated the contents of the Scripture, and logically adjusted them into useful system, so as frequently to correct the erroneous interpretations and deductions of the regenerated; but, as metaphysicians, skilled in the

manner in which the passions are affected by the presentation of certain objects, and proceeding on the supposition of the facts and representations of the Word being true, they have so accommodated these facts with the suitable expression of sentiment, as by their prayers, and sermons, and communion addresses, and poems, and pictures, and music, to conjure a harmonious response from regenerated hearts. Yea, with their more accurate analysis of the operations of the mind, and the discernment of images calculated to affect the sentiments, they will, at times, convict certain feelings of regenerated men, of being fanciful and delusive, because there is nothing in the Word, when genuinely interpreted, which could have excited such emotions.

The whole of the difference, then, betwixt the two parties, the regenerated and the unregenerated, consists in this, that the one *believes* the contents of the Book, and the other does not; while they are equal in their ability to discern what these contents are: just as a Christian is as capable of discovering the meaning of the Koran as the most devout Mufti, or, of a Shaster, as the most devout Bramin.—That regenerated men should generally excel others as discerners of Bible meaning, is only what we would naturally expect, as the result of experience, of more deeply interested study, and better acquaintance with the system. "Every one that useth milk is unskilful in the Word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age; even those, who, *by reason of use*, have their

senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. v 13, 14). This is evidently greatly different from a supernaturally communicated intuition, which the occasional superiority of the unregenerated as discerners, and the fallibility of the regenerated universally, equally demonstrate to be a mere figment of the imagination.

(3.) I observe, in the third place, that the work does not consist, as others imagine and affirm, in the production of a *holy disposition*, antecedently to the presentation of the Word to the mind; so that it is prepared to *relish* its truths, and thereby induced to believe them.—The greatness of the names of many of the divines who hold this opinion, forbids that we treat it with contempt; but I cannot refrain from expressing my astonishment. The greater part of them not only admit, but contend, that it is in the creating of this pre-disposition that Regeneration properly consists. And they do so self-consistently. He who is so disposed as to relish lessons of piety, is already pious, and who is so disposed as to relish lessons of benevolence, is already benevolent; and who is so disposed as to relish the promises, is already heavenly minded, in the very essence of the various characters. But to what does that 'already' refer? Why, to a point of time before the Word is believed—it may be, before a syllable of it has been heard. This I cannot otherwise characterize than as being a palpable contradiction of the Scripture. "He begat us with the Word of Truth;"—"Being born again, not of corruptible

seed, but, of incorruptible, by the Word of God"—"The Words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are Life:" *There* stands the testimony, than which there is none more explicit on any subject in the entire Scripture.—According to the dogma of those metaphysicians referred to, the Word would be at best only the *aliment* of a new life, which was communicated independently of it; whereas, in the passages quoted, and there are many more similar, it is declared to be the life-giving, generative, spiritual, *seed*.—Those who are less conversant with the dexterities of metaphysical theology may feel curious about what the abettors of the pre-disposition theory say of these and similar passages. Will my statement be credited, when I report, that they represent that which the Apostles call Regeneration as being denominated so *improperly;* and that the Predisposition, which they, the metaphysicians, have imagined, is the only species which is *properly* dignified with the name! Even Dr. Payne, who essentially abets the theory, cannot here withhold his censure, though it is expressed as gently as possible. "I confess," says he, "I have always been dissatisfied with the way in which Mr. Fuller, Dr. Williams, and others have attempted to reconcile these passages (James i. 18, and 1 Peter i. 23), with the sentiments they hold on the subject. James and Peter refer, say they, to Regeneration *improperly so called.* The *proper* sense of the term is exibited in those passages which describe the effect of the direct agency of the Spirit upon the mind. Now, in the first

place, I apprehend many of the passages to which they refer do not exhibit exclusively the effect of this direct agency of the Spirit, but the results of the combined influence of the Spirit and of truth; such as, "create in me a clean heart, O God; renew a right spirit within me." And, in the second place, I think I may venture to affirm, that not one of those passages to which they appeal, as exhibiting the effect of the direct influence of the Spirit, although none of them should be excepted against, declares that effect to be Regeneration. Mr. Fuller is, therefore, involved in the curious predicament of affirming a certain effect or change to be Regeneration, in the proper sense of the term, which is never said to be such; and of denying, that a certain other change *is*, strictly speaking, Regeneration, though *it* only is designated by that name in the Word of God. We cannot well be wrong in following the apostles James and Peter,—in calling that Regeneration, which is so denominated by them."—(P. 336.)

But, besides being an unscriptural derogation from the honour of the Word, without even an apparent enhancing of the honour of the Spirit, I contend that the dogma is glaringly unphilosophical, and violates common sense. It contains a preposterous transposition of cause and effect. In all our other dealings with men we attempt to influence their dispositions by means of truth; but, according to this inversion, it would be presumptuous for any man to preach the Word, in expectation that the Spirit might bless and use it for

changing the sinner's inclinations;—the only lawful design being to furnish what might gratify and cherish a disposition—*the holy relish*—which, perchance, has been theretofore communicated. Will these metaphysicians explain to us, on this principle, the change of Adam's disposition? Did the Tempter effect it by some subtile influence, when his victim slept in insensibility, without the excitement even of a dream,—so that when he awoke he was prepared for relishing the lie which was presented for his belief? I ask the question in no spirit of burlesque, but in argumentative soberness; and when I contend, that, in order to be consistent, they must answer in the affirmative—that that, or something similar, was the mode of his seduction—little surely is requisite for exposing the absurdity. The seduction evidently commenced with the lie, by believing which the disposition was vitiated. So is it in the recovery of man. By means of the truth, which he causes to be believed, the Holy Spirit restores that original disposition which Satan perverted by means of falsehood and deception.

It will be observed, that I feel more than usual ardour in the reprobating of this error. The reason is, that I regard it, not only with that dislike with which I regard everything that is unscriptural and unphilosophical, but, with a kind of personal aversion, inasmuch as it impugns my professional character. On such a principle, I should feel, that my occupation as a preacher of the gospel would be nearly gone. It would behove

me to bid farewell to all my attempts at argument and rhetorical persuasion, with the view of furnishing weapons which the Spirit might employ for quelling an evil, and generating a good disposition; and to limit myself to a simple lection of the Word, and grammatical explanation of its terms. Yea, with the reading of much of the Word itself, I should feel I might dispense; since much of it consists of arguments of refutation and conviction, and of rhetorical enforcement, for which there would be no need nor room, on the principle, that there was a disposition already prepared for receiving the simple statement of the truth with admiration and joy. You might as well argue with a child to persuade him of the sweetness of honey. Either, after all my reading and pondering, I mistake the theory; or else it is worthy of being denounced as deeply mischievous, whether to the preacher or hearer of the Word whose mind is influenced by it.

(4.) That Inspiration-work, then, of the Spirit, the knowledge of the nature of which we are in quest of, consists simply in causing the truth of the Bible to be believed, by a direct operation on the mind, *in spite* of existing prejudices and aversions; which prejudices and aversions the truth, when once received, proceeds to quell and eradicate; and *that*, in many instances, by a protracted process; instead of there being no prejudices to quell, in consequence of the previous communication of a *holy relish*. How vain it is for men to contend for

a theory which is every day, almost every hour, contradicted by their own experience, and that of all their regenerated brethren!—After this clearing of the question, however, negatively, and determining with some precision where the point of mystery lies, it is evident that we cannot proceed much further in the inquiry, without subjecting ourselves to the charge of that profanity against which I have already protested. Nevertheless, a few sentences additional seem to be both allowable and desirable.

Dr. Payne, who, as already intimated, has adopted the theory of pre-disposition in a modified form, says, that he knows of nothing, with which the producing of that disposition may be compared, but the "primary act of creation," (P. 359.) In the like manner, I, who unite with those who maintain that it is the faith, in order to the disposition, and not the disposition, in order to the faith, which the Divine Agency produces, do not deny that the operation may be of this miraculous character. But there are few, I should think, who would have recourse to such a solution, except as a last resort. With all the humility, therefore, which treading in the shadow of so great a mystery demands, and whilst wishing to avoid all appearance of dogmatism, I venture the following suggestion;—that there may be a sacred avenue—a *via sacra*—belonging to the original constitution of the human mind, which the Creator reserves for his own sovereign use, and by which He transmits vividly to the believing faculty those ideas with which

He designs it to be impressed. In the phenomena of dreaming, of somnambulism, of febrile excitement, and of mesmerism, we have instances of mental faculty and susceptibility which rebuke the vulgar limitation of its powers to what we perceive in its common and every-day exercises.—And when that hypothesis of the Lord having a way, consecrated to Himself, prepared in the constitutions of us all, recommends itself to my views of his Sovereign glory and government—although it does not remove the mystery from our subject, which I neither attempt nor desire to do, yet it reduces the violence which is offered our reason, when, according to the other hypothesis, we are called to believe, that in every case of conversion there is displayed an operation as miraculous as the creation of the universe.—But I affirm nothing—nothing further than the fact, revealed by the divine testimony, that there is a direct work of the Spirit on the mind in causing the belief of the Word —without my having any understanding of the nature of the operation.

Though the mode of the operation remain an unexplained and inexplicable mystery, yet the fact of there being a direct action of the Spirit on the mind in producing the necessary faith, being certified to us by the Scripture, we can proceed to use the doctrine of it for practical ends as cogently as if we clearly understood the whole of the process.

Observe, therefore, in the First place, that all are

responsible for being regenerated.—After having been engaged at such length, and so earnestly, in illustrating that the work is one of divine power and grace, some may regard this remark as being in the *inverse ratio* of the attempted demonstration. If the work is the Lord's, they will say, how can man be accountable for its being performed? And yet, unless all our discussions carry the design of producing this sense of our accountability, as one of their chief intentions, they are vain and profitless, or worse.

(1.) I answer therefore, *first*, that since it is an immoral disposition, as has been largely illustrated, which incapacitates the unbeliever for receiving the regenerative truth, and makes the divine interposition necessary, he is subject to the condemnation of a criminal for his rejection of it: Just as the drunkard, though incapacitated for working, is responsible for the maintenance of his family, and has their starvation reckoned to his account as a crime.

(2.) But I answer *secondly*, and specially, that all are accountable for being regenerated, or in other words, for believing, inasmuch as the necessary help waits to be prayerfully applied for. Though the sick man's inability may not have been self-inflicted, like the drunkard's, yet is the hunger of his children chargeable to him as a crime, if there be a wealthy and benevolent neighbour, application to whom would secure relief; or, which is better for illustration, if there be a skilled and merciful physician near, application to whom would

gain his cure.—Now, the welcome to apply for the relief or cure of the Spirit, and the assurance that the application will be successful, are subjects on which the Scripture gives its testimony with an expressness which is nowhere else surpassed. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James i. 5). "And I say unto you," saith Christ, "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you.—If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?—If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the HOLY SPIRIT to them that ask Him?" (Luke xi. 9-13.) If the regeneration, then, has not been effected, we are sure that that application for it has not been made, for making which all are responsible.

Here, however, it may be objected, that it is absurd to represent a man who is in a state of unbelief, praying to be convinced of that being true, which, by the supposition, he suspects to be a falsehood. This is no cavil, but a rational objection to much of the common recommendation to pray;—when a young man, for instance, who is found questioning the doctrine of our Lord's divinity, is recommended to pray, that God may open his eyes to perceive the Redeemer's glory.—If he were generally impressed with views of that glory, but felt perplexed with difficulties, or held erroneous opinions, in your account, on particular points, the

recommendation would be appropriate enough: but being sceptical on the entire subject, as he professes himself to be, the recommendation is most preposterous. You yourself may intercedingly present such a prayer on his behalf; but, to urge him to pray *in this form* is urging him to pray, that he may receive grace to believe what he is persuaded is a superstition and an idolatry. —The grand plea to be held with him, and all infidel men of whatever sort is, that it is the first duty of an intelligent created nature to submit itself to the Creator for the regulation of its mind, and confidingly to pray, "May the God that made me shew me *the truth*, wherever it may lie, whether in the New Testament or the Koran, in the writings of Paley or Voltaire, or in those of Wardlaw or Priestly." For such a prayer every man is responsible, in virtue of his dependent nature as a creature; and by the rule of the scriptural assurances already quoted, we are certain that the responsibilities of the duty have not been fulfilled, wherever we find the regenerating faith wanting.—There is another scripture, of a somewhat different character, which bears strongly on the same point. "If any man," said our Lord, "will do his will," *i.e.*, if any man be willing or desirous (θελῃ) to do his will, "he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John vii. 17). Whether the right interpretation of this be, as proposed by some, that a mind so disposed will naturally appreciate the gospel; or, as proposed by others, that the spiritual illumination will be conferred

on it, the responsibility will be unaffected; for every one is responsible for desiring to do the divine will; which desire, if it exist, will, according to either interpretation, be followed by a belief of the truth; so that the want of the faith proves the want of that previous *will* which is the prime obligation of a moral intelligence —even the will to do the will of its Creator.

It is surely unnecessary, at this time of day, to do much more than simply advert to the objection, that such a prayer as that which we have imagined above, is not "a prayer of faith," and consequently will not be answered. Such a prayer, indeed! some will exclaim, in astonishment, whose simple minds have never felt any difficulty any where, and for whom all has been the easiest plain-sailing, under the pilotage of the catechism. Comfortable mortals! But, in proportion to their own happy case, they should sympathize with those who have been constructed with a mental constitution which compels them to *think;* and whom storms of *thought*, far out at sea, so different from the catechism's canal, often threaten with shipwreck. All those then who may be perplexed with the question, If one who does not yet believe the gospel is warranted to pray, I refer to Dr. Payne (p. 298), and especially Dr. Balmer (Ser. xxi.), who have satisfactorily illustrated, that it is an acceptable prayer, when a man prays humbly and sincerely, as far as his conscientious convictions carry him. To limit the character of "the prayer of faith" to those requests which make a full recognition of the mediation

of the Redeemer, is to deny the mercy of prayer to those who stand most in need of it—even all those who are groping amid darkness. It is most true, that no prayer of sinful man is ever answered except for Christ's sake; but many a prayer of groaning nature, like that of the Centurion (Acts x. 4) and of the *genius* of Macedonia (Acts x. 4) has "*gone* up for a memorial before God," when the suppliant was yet ignorant even of the name of that Saviour, through whose intercession the prayer prevailed.

In the Second place, let the ascertained fact, that God's Spirit deals directly with the mind, be employed to ends of consolation. When a man fears the impetuousness of his own passions, and feels that no trust is to be placed in his prudential reflections and resolutions—when, as a parent, after the failure of all his tears and threatenings, he is ready to give up his profligate son in despair, and fears to send forth his remaining dutiful one into that world which has corrupted his brother—when, as a philanthropist, having succeeded to an extent so trifling in his enterprises, he is ready to resign all hope of any amelioration of human nature—with what gratefulness the thought comes to his aid of that "residue of the Spirit"—that omnipotent Power *in reserve,* whose energies may be employed for quelling the most audacious with his terrors, and invigorating the feeblest with his animating hopes!

In the Third place, let us be on our guard against a superstitious presumption. We are warranted, indeed, to expect much from the Providence of the Spirit in the way of making preparation for the reception of the Word; but we must remember, that it is only by his Inspiring application of that Word that the great act of Regeneration is ultimately effected: teaching us to be diligent in storing both our own and our neighbours' minds with the *ideas* of Scripture, that they may be ready for being applied by the divine operation. Under a preceding department of the subject this matter was largely reviewed; but of such importance is it that I additionally transcribe here the similar observations of Dr. Payne. "It sometimes happens that the footsteps of a sinner, going on in his sins, are arrested by unlooked-for and dreadful calamities. The hand of death suddenly snatches from him the companions of his guilt, or the power of God stretches him on the bed of affliction, and brings him within the view of the eternal world. Conscience shakes off her slumbers, and *will* be heard. A spirit of penitence is awakened; and the delightful issue of the visitation is, that he "becomes a servant of God, having his fruit unto holiness, and the end thereof everlasting life." Still it is not the affliction which turns his heart from sin to God; affliction is utterly incapable of doing this. It is by the "incorruptible seed of the Word," and not by any of the mercies or judgments of God, that sinners are born again. Divine Providence is the minister of Divine Grace, but it is *only* the

minister.* It is often employed to awaken serious reflection; to recall the neglected truths of God's Word to the recollection of the sinner; to impress them powerfully on his conscience; and to fix his attention upon that truth which saves the soul from death and condemnation. But still it is the Gospel of God, and not the Providence of God, that enlightens the eyes and sanctifies the heart," (Lect. xxii.) The practical conclusion is, that we *pray* as if all depended on the Spirit; and that we *work*, in our personal study of the Word, and disseminating its truths among our friends and throughout the world, as if all depended on ourselves. The Church for sowing, and God for giving the increase, is the great rule of our duty and expectation.

* This distinction does not appear to be made with Dr. Payne's usual felicity. By that which has been adopted in these pages we have been enabled to represent the Providence of the Spirit, as being as much *of grace* as his Inspiration.

SECTION FIFTH.

REGENERATION, AS PRODUCED; AND AS DEVELOPED.

HAVING illustrated, as far as it is lawful for us to inquire, the manner in which Regeneration is effected; I proceed to consider more closely the precise time of its occurrence—the amount of change then accomplished—and its succeeding development.

I. In regard of the First of these points—the precise time when Regeneration takes place, considerable caution should be employed in determining it. I do not refer at present so much to the practical question, when a man personally concerned about his salvation examines himself of his *evidences* of having undergone the change, —as to the theoretical question, in the system of doctrinal theology, about the time, in the course of the Spirit's operations, when the work is consummated.—A brief consideration of what we discovered, when investigating the Instrumentality of this moral revolution, will assist us to clear views on the subject. We found, that it is not any scriptural truth whatever, which, when believed, changes the heart savingly; but that *system* of

truth, which comprehends as its principal element, a revelation of divine mercy to the individual himself, in the proffered Mediation of the Redeemer. Observe, consequently, that there may be, yea, almost necessarily must be, movements and changes of considerable magnitude and importance, effected by the belief of *parts* of the system, which do not amount to that Regeneration which is accomplished only by a belief of the *whole* of it.

Not only, for instance, may a man, under the agony of an awakened and convicted conscience, cry out, "What shall I do?" but the conviction may have been produced by the Spirit's presentation of the truth to his mind, and yet the work have no title to the name of Regeneration. Thus far we cannot say that the seed has even been sown. Nothing has been done further than a breaking up and preparation of the soil. It is only that Schoolmaster work of the Law, which is preparatory to the conversion of the gospel.—That which produces so much mistake here is the circumstance, that the individual, thus convicted of sin, may cease from much of his wickedness, and adopt a new course of well-doing: but it is as yet but the life and conduct of the slave who dreads his master; and is destitute of that filial affection and zeal which characterise Regeneration; and which are produced only by the belief of that truth —that God looks on him with a Father's pity, and beseeches him to be reconciled to Him, through that mediation of his Son which he has so mercifully provided.

II. The Second point proposed for consideration is the *amount* of change effected at the time of the New Birth.—Observe, then, that though there may have been long and extensive preparation made by Providential arrangements, and the application of the Law to the conscience, yet, when the Gospel is at last applied, the Regeneration is effected *all at once;* and that, in a very important sense, the work is *entire* and *perfect*, the first hour of believing. There is a common and useful distinction made betwixt Justification and Sanctification, in respect of the one being an *act*, and the other a *work:* the Justification of the sinner being something which is begun and finished together; whereas his Sanctification is something which has a progress of considerable duration, before it is completed. Now, some have erroneously transferred this view of Sanctification to Regeneration and spoken of *it* also as if it were a protracted work; as if one part of the New Man were formed to-day; another, to-morrow; a third, the day following, and so on in progression, till the New Creation were perfected: as if he were this day made a pious and prayerful man—to-morrow, a sober and chaste one—the day following, a benevolent and charitable one—and something more the next day, till one after another all the graces were infused into his nature. This is not only a misconception, but one, as we shall presently see, practically evil in its influence.

Let it, therefore, be observed carefully, that the "New man in Christ Jesus" is formed an entire man at

once. He is produced indeed at first as a *child;* but still he is a *perfect* child, with all the properties of a man—none being reserved to be afterwards supplemented but only developed. The Cross of Christ, at the very first glance of the believing eye, flashes light over the entire moral nature: with electrifying power it penetrates and pervades the soul, leaving no affection unrenewed by a portion of sanctifying influence. It does so generally, in virtue of the reconciliation which it effects with the divine government, so as to produce a loyal respect to all God's commandments. But, besides this, *that Cross* has a direct and special lesson for every affection and passion of the heart: a lesson for the abasement of pride and the inculcation of humility, when it shews a man the desert of his sin, and what Another behoved to suffer for him on its account; a lesson for his fear, calling on him to beware of renouncing the faith and of returning to the commission of that, the penalty of which is demonstrated to be so dreadful, and which in the event of apostacy he must himself endure; a lesson for his sense of gratitude and justice, when it shews him the richness of the divine mercy, and the weight and extent of the obligations under which he lies to honour and serve with faithfulness the Lord that bought him; a lesson of benevolence, when it sets before him an example of such self-denying charity; and finally, a lesson for his hope, redeeming it from enslavement to the baseness of earthly objects, through disclosing for its aim the glory of the heavenly

inheritance.—There is yet more than this: Instead of the Cross, when seen by faith, having thus a special lesson for every affection of the heart, so that no department of it, from the very first, is left without a share of the happy renovation—suppose, that the vision had lighted with virtuous influence directly and immediately on only one affection: yet, so is the heart of man constructed; so are its passions relatively attuned, that you cannot strike one chord without making all the rest vibrate in harmony. Or, recurring to a former illustration, you cannot electrify one, without electrifying the entire circle. "All the arts," says the Roman orator, "which belong to polite learning, have a certain common bond of union, and are naturally held together by a certain kindred relationship." How much more strikingly does not this hold true, in respect of the family of the passions! For evil or for good, let any member be affected, all the others immediately sympathize.

Observe, now, the practical bearing of the foregoing illustration: it is of great importance. Suppose that a man has acquired some delight in *devotional* exercises—in the reading of the Bible, in prayer, in the singing of praise, in Sabbath sanctification, and the observance of sacraments—before he conclude that the feeling is genuine, and a product of the work of the Spirit of Regeneration, he should inquire, if his heart have undergone a change in the direction of the *social* affections

also; if he be more tenderly disposed towards his fellow-creatures—more forbearing and forgiving, more candid in his judgments of them, less envious of their prosperity and excellences, more easily moved by their afflictions, and readier to befriend and aid them. And should he not find that he has undergone any change in these respects; but that he is as irascible, as censorious, as revengeful, as spiteful and envious, as reluctant to part with his wealth for the relief of the distressed as ever, let him be assured, that all the appearances of devotion towards God do not proceed from genuine principle; and that they are the product of some other agency than that of the Holy Ghost: for the divine work which produces the one order of feelings produces the other also, and at one and the same time. No, indeed: the Regeneration birth is not a mutilated, or deformed, or monstrous one. Of that you may be certain. As in the natural birth, so in the spiritual, among a number born there is a variety of degrees of excellence, when organ is compared with organ, and member with member, and feature with feature; but every one is possessed of all the parts; every one is a *perfect* child.

How striking and beautiful are the following remarks of Lord Bacon, when giving instructions for the formation of a moral character: "We must not proceed as a statuary proceeds in forming a statue, who works sometimes on one part and sometimes on another; but we must proceed, and it is in our power to proceed, as

nature does, in forming a flower or any other of her productions; *Rudimenta partium omnium simul parit et producit:* She throws out altogether, and at once, the whole system of every being, and the rudiments of all the parts."—The law for nature is also the law for grace: only, in grace it operates more uniformly and certainly. There is here not only no part wanting; but, although one organ may possess superior excellence when compared with another, yet the disproportion is never so great as to present the appearance of monstrosity. As President Edwards says, there is "beautiful Symmetry in those affections which are gracious:" so that if there is a large head of zeal for God, with but a small heart of charity for man, you may be certain, that much of that disproportionate largeness, if not the whole of it, is the effect of disease—of ignorance, of hypocrisy, of superstition, of bigotry or sectarianism: for, if it had been a belief of the Word which produced such an enlargement of the head, it would have enlarged the heart also.—And equally, let some who felicitate themselves on their large hearts for alms-giving and patriotism, when with their small heads they mock at those who take to heart the manner in which "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles," be assured, that neither in that largeness of which *they* vaunt is there any soundness of moral health.

III. The Third point proposed for consideration, under this topic, is the Developement of Regeneration.

This is usually expressed by the term Sanctification; which, strictly speaking, includes Regeneration: Regeneration being the first act of the work of Sanctification. But, having made this explanation for preventing mistake, it is convenient to treat of Sanctification as the work which advances after Regeneration has been effected. In this restricted sense it will denote the nursing, nourishing, and uprearing of the child, which, though produced, as we have seen, *perfect*, in respect of its being possessed of all the parts and properties of a man, is nevertheless *but* a child, in respect of weakness; from which condition it is to be reared gradually, like other children, into the vigour of manhood.

Some may ask—Since it is the work of an Agent so powerful as the Spirit of God, why is the New man produced in the weakness of infancy, and not at once in that vigour of manhood, which has just been mentioned, after the manner of the creation of Adam?—To this foolish observation it might be sufficient to reply, that such a change would not only be miraculous, but physical, rather than moral. Nevertheless, the answering of it more at large, affords an opportunity for illustrating some important truths.

Observe, then, in the First place, that the newly regenerated man is necessarily weak, in consequence of the nature of the Instrumentality of his regeneration. This we have seen is the Word of God, believed. Now, let it be once admitted that there is propriety in the employment of such an instrumentality by the divine

government, then, the weakness of the new life at its commencement, and the gradual nature of its invigoration, are necessary consequences; because it is only gradually, both in respect of distinctness and extent, that the mind can receive the truth. Were it not for the circumstance which will be immediately explained, could we perceive the whole compass of the truth, and with the requisite clearness of perception, all at once, Regeneration would be commensurate with Sanctification. But without a miracle our minds could not be rendered capable of such an instantaneous width and length, and depth and height of survey: and since it is only gradually that the truth can be received, the holiness which is the result of that reception, must partake of the character of being only gradual in its increase also.

But observe, in the Second place, and specially, that there are inveterate *habits* of sin to be corrected and overcome, which would make the work of Sanctification gradual, though the Regeneration *principle* were perfect. Those habits, acquired in the unregenerated state, shall, at times, with a species of physical force, overcome the new nature which abhors them; so as to afford room for the representation, no doubt somewhat in a figurative way, that it is not the man's present regenerated self which is responsible for the transgression; but, that it is to be reckoned to the account of that old corrupted nature, which has burdened his new principles with these evil habits. Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians

(iv. 22-24), distinctly represents the convert as being constituted of an Old and a New man, who share him between them—who contend with each other for the mastery—and who consequently may have different parts of his conduct reckoned with propriety to their respective accounts. Besides; whichever view may be adopted in the much disputed question, whether, in the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans, the same apostle describes the state of an unregenerated or regenerated man, it is indisputable that he places *that* to the account of sinful Habit, of the charge of which he absolves Principle. And perhaps the apostle John, when, in his First epistle, chapter third, verse ninth, he says, "Whosoever is born of God cannot sin," refers to the Principles of the New man, as distinguished from the Habits of the Old man. There are two other ways by which it is customary to attempt to explain this passage. Some limit the meaning of 'sin,' to a *course* of sinning, or great and presumptuous transgressions. Others limit the meaning of 'cannot,' and argue, that it must be understood in a qualified sense, as denoting a great moral difficulty only, and not an impossibility. Neither of these solutions is satisfactory; at least, not more so, than the one now suggested, which has the advantage both of preserving the natural force of the terms and of harmonizing with the analogy of faith.

I am quite alive to the danger which is incident to the foregoing distinction; when some may licentiously plead, as an apology for their sin, that it is not the fault

of their *present principles*, but of their *former habits*:—that their habits, when they were in a state of nature—of intemperance, or sensuality, or profane swearing, or hoarding of money, were so long cherished and deeply enrooted, that they must be excused, though now, when converted, they should occasionally transgress; and not be so liberal in their charities as some of their neighbours, whose habits were not so inveterate. Well, I cannot help it, if some should make an apostolic representation, which is full of consolation for a tender conscience, a savour of death unto death for themselves. Only, let me caution such persons of this—that they take a great deal for granted, when they assume to themselves the character of being regenerated. That remains to be proved, not by an easy succumbing to these old habits, nor a speedily recovered complacency with yourself after a fall, nor a proud pleading of your own apology, instead of leaving that to be done by others: no, indeed; but, by a self-denying struggling against them, and a crucifying of them, till they have been mortified; and others acquired and established of an opposite character.

The inquiry now presents itself, If it be a fact—if it consist with experience and observation—if it be a scriptural doctrine, that, when a man is once regenerated, he advances gradually from his original state of child-like weakness in grace, to the strength and stature of manhood.—I reply that the general representation of

the Scripture is to this effect. "Grow in grace" is the law of christian life (2 Peter iii. 18); and the apostle censures the Hebrew christians for being in the state of babes, and not having attained to the vigour of men of full age (Heb. v. 13); while he says of himself, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 13); illustrating that scripture which promises, that "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint;" for "the path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." There is much more of the same nature which might be quoted were it necessary. Accordingly, the Westminster divines, in framing the Catechism, have placed "growth in grace" in their enumeration of the benefits which flow from Justification and Adoption;—not necessarily and always, as we shall afterwards see, any more than "assurance of God's love," which they equally have placed in the list; but generally and naturally; and unless there be some strongly counteracting influence.

This, therefore, is the form in which I maintain the proposition—that the general rule is, that the child of regeneration, from the day of his birth, gradually advances towards the vigour of the perfectly sanctified man. To prevent misconception, I observe at the outset,

that I shall not intermeddle with the much disputed question, if complete sanctification be attainable in this world; further than to say, that although I suspect it has never been realised; yet is it not only not presumptuous to aim at it, but sinful not to have attained to it; since God wills it, and has made provision for it. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification," saith the apostle (1 Thes. iv. 3)—not a partial sanctification we may be certain; but such as Christ prescribes, when he says, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." And, then how ample is the provision which has been made for endowing us with the perfection! The resources of the Spirit, on which we are all welcomed to draw for aid, are the resources of Omnipotence—Let no one, therefore, plead in defence of his imperfectly sanctified life, that nothing else was ever designed; but, that, at the best, he should *sin moderately* till the end of his earthly pilgrimage. The apology is most profane. I reiterate the demand of Christ, "Be ye perfect."

Having made this explanation, I proceed to defend and illustrate the proposition, that the general rule for the christian life is Progressive Sanctification. This defence and illustration I shall conduct with a special, though not exclusive, view to the help of some of tender conscience, who are ready despairingly to conclude, that they cannot have been regenerated, since they do not discern in themselves any of that progression in holiness which is characteristic of the saving change.

I, therefore, observe, in the First place, that there may be progress, when it is not discerned, in consequence of the shortness of the interval betwixt the two times, at which the states of character are compared. Boston, in his Fourfold State (State iii., Part Second), makes this illustration: "Were a person to fix his eye ever so steadfastly on a growing tree, he would not see it growing; but, if he compare the tree as it now is, with what it was some years ago, he will certainly perceive that it has grown." As a tree, so is a child: and as a child of nature, so is a child of grace. And as that mother would expose herself to ridicule, who might express fear for her child's health, because these eight days she had observed no increase of his stature; so there are some converts whose impetuosity needs to be suppressed, when they shall begin to suspect their conversion, because, on examining themselves this Sabbath evening, they find no improvement on what they found to be their condition, when they made the examination on the Sabbath evening immediately preceding. How unreasonable is all this? There is nothing wrong either in the examination being so soon repeated, or in a comparison being made betwixt two conditions belonging to points of time so near: the fault lies in making the unfavourable result of the comparison an argument against the genuineness of the conversion. When *this* is the question, let two inventories or measurements be selected which have been made at times considerably remote from each other. I may not peremptorily prescribe what is a

sufficient interval: but I suggest, from new-year's-day to new-year's-day. If after the lapse of a twelvemonth, improvement is clearly discernible, the sign is good and sufficient; though it would be better, of course, and more satisfactory, were it discernible in a half or twelfth of the time.

It is worthy of notice here, both for relieving the one party of perplexity, and warning the other against remissness, that, just as in nature, growth is more discernible in the child or youth, than in the man, as he approaches the vigour of his age; so in grace, the progress should be more discernible at the commencement of the spiritual life. At that time there is more both to learn and unlearn—more, according to the representation of the apostle, both of the Old man to be "put off," and of the New man to be "put on" (Ephes. iv. 22-24). At an advanced stage the opportunity of any thing new being done, in any of these respects, is in a manner exhausted; and the growth is rather of the nature of consolidation, which is not so discernible as increment. The youth, therefore, of fifteen, should make progress in a much higher ratio, in respect of what is apparent, than the aged saint of seventy, who has for many years been the subject of the spiritual culture.

I remark finally, on this point, that, where I have spoken of the difficulty of discerning progress, when the measurements or valuations which are compared have been made at times within but a short distance of each other, the observations must be understood as referring

to the state of the heart—its dispositions, temper, and the general tone of its feelings. In respect of external behaviour, the improvement may in some instances be clearly discernible betwixt the rising and setting of the sun.

I remark, in the Second place, that, even when the two states of character, betwixt which the comparison is made, belong to times having a reasonable interval, an adverse judgment respecting progression is often pronounced unjustly, in consequence of a miscalculation of the moral value of the two conditions. It is only the principal cases of such miscalculation to which, from limited space, I can particularly advert; and that, too, with but meagre illustration.

(1.) The *fervour* of feeling of which many were the subjects at their conversion, contrasted with their *coolness* at a subsequent period, will give occasion not only to their neighbours, but to themselves, for making the reflection, that they have *declined*, and "left their first love," as when Cowper sung so touchingly his melancholy lament:—

> Where is the blessedness I knew
> When first I saw the Lord?—
> Where is the soul-refreshing view,
> Of Jesus and his word?

That the reasons for preferring the charge of spiritual declension are in many cases too good, I do not question; but not seldom is it preferred ignorantly and unfairly. That *fervour* was, in the majority of

instances, attributable, in part, at least, to the novelty of first impressions,—the youthful flow of animal spirits —and the agreeable and exciting circumstances, in respect of pulpit ministrations, of dear companionship, of honourableness of position, and of hopefulness of advantages, amid which the truth was first received; while the affection was not so deeply rooted in principle —not adequate to the withstanding of such temptations, or the enduring of such afflictions, or the making of such sacrifices, or the undergoing of such heavy and protracted labour, as that *cooler* condition of which they complain. It was like the camp songs and boastings of the raw recruit, compared with the sedateness of the veteran warrior. Follow them both to the field of battle, and compare them there!

"These are not always the strongest affections which are the most violent," says he, who is for the present my favourite authority; and again, "the strength of our affections is to be measured by the firmness and fixedness of the root." But hear him yet more at large: "You are to consider that there is a twofold love to Christ: FIRST, There is a *sensible* love to Him. . . . These *glowings* of affection are usually wrought in young converts. . . . While the fire-edge is upon the young convert, he looks upon others, reputed to be godly; and not finding in them such a temper or disposition as in himself, he is ready to censure them; and to think there is far less religion in the world than indeed there is. But when his own cup begins to

settle below the brim, and he finds *that* in himself, which made him question the state of others, he is more humbled, and feels more and more the necessity of daily recourse to the blood of Christ for pardon, and to the Spirit of Christ for sanctification; and thus *grows downward* in humiliation, self-loathing, and self-denial. —SECOND, There is a *rational* love to Christ, which, without these sensible emotions felt in the former case, evidences itself by a dutiful regard to the divine authority and command. When one bears such a love to Christ, though the vehement stirrings of affection be wanting, yet he is truly tender of offending a gracious God, endeavours to walk before Him in all well-pleasing, and is grieved at the heart for what is displeasing unto Him: 'For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.'"—Metaphysicians, of what practical worth, were not these divines of the Marrow school rendered by their own experience, their pastoral dealing with the experiences of a confiding people, their reverence of Scripture, and their solid common sense! Nevertheless, I am not sure that I clearly understand what is meant by that "sensible love" which is represented as being more incident to young converts. But, if it mean any thing more than that excitement of novelty, or that greater liveliness with which youthful blood and nerves assist to love in religion as in all other things; and if it include the enjoyment of these times of the meditations of a sanctified imagination to which the Psalmist refers, when he says, "My soul

shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips; when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches;"—if this, I say, be what is signified by "sensible love," then, though it be the author of The Fourfold State who has uttered the oracle, I protest against its partiality, when he represents such love as being peculiarly characteristic of youthful piety. I say nothing of my own experience, but books of memoirs, and conversation with christian friends widely prove, that these heavenly visions, which refresh the soul with a *sense* of the divine love, are enjoyed, not less frequently, nor less rapturously, by the old than by the young. It would be strange if they were not.—In these days, when the advocating of the claims of youth is a favourite exercise, let us take care, that we inflict no injury on the privileges of their *betters*—the veterans of the army of faith. The spirit of Boston assents, and fervently says, Amen.

(2.) A clearer discovery of their sinfulness makes some undiscriminating professors adjudge themselves to be declining; when it is, on the contrary, their better cultivated and more refined moral sense which is now perceiving sin, where, not only the rude conscience of nature, but the comparatively rude conscience of a newly regenerated heart, saw little, or none before: though that sin had a deeper and wider possession of their characters, in those times which they say were

better times, than it has now, of which they complain as a time of declension.—"The sun," says Boston, "sending its beams through the window, discovers the motes in the house, and their motions, which were not seen before; so the light of grace [or the brighter shining of that light] may discover the risings and actings of corruption, in another manner than ever the man saw them before, though they really do not rise, or act more [so] vigorously." Or, otherwise, when the mind was in a state of mortification it did not feel its wounds; its feeling of them painful now is a symptom of recovery. There is no paradox so easily explained, as, that he who grows in holiness, usually grows also in a sense of his sinfulness: just as, the more learned that a true philosopher becomes, the more does he feel, and humbly confess, his ignorance.

(3.) Many mistake the circumstance of their feeling *tempted* to commit sin; or the circumstance of blasphemous, or impure, or revengeful thoughts springing up in the mind, as being sin itself. And when these temptations or imaginations are not only, not ceasing to trouble them, but at the time of their making the self-examination, are troubling them perhaps more than ever,—where is that progress, they will despondingly ask, which is characteristic of a regenerated state? and are ready to conclude, that former favourable views of themselves were all self-delusion.—Let such persons reflect generally, that sin does not consist in being tempted,

but in yielding to the temptation; not in the entrance of an evil imagination into the mind, or rather an imagination *about* evil, but in welcoming and entertaining it. Was not Christ tempted? And did not images of great wickedness present themselves for the disturbing of his holy mind? And when, like Him, you resist the temptation, and adopt measures for expelling the imagination, through hatred of it, what more can you expect or demand of yourself?

More particularly, I observe, in the First place, in respect of *temptation*, that, even on the supposition of the nature being uncorrupted, the sight of a tree good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, would have excited desire in a hungry man, in whosoever garden it might grow: and instead of your own, if it grew in the garden of a neighbour, when the rising of the desire would have been the effect of the constitution with which the Creator formed you, and therefore sinless, your duty would have been discharged in turning your eyes away, and fleeing from the temptation. Equally, after the nature has been corrupted, and its appetites and passions have been inflamed and exacerbated by the morbidity of sin, although the demand of the habits of the Old man for indulgence be clamorous, that is surely not to be imputed as a fault to the New man, so as to make you question your regeneration, if he resist the clamour, and refuse compliance.

You may reply, however, that, under the discipline of the New man, the craving of these old habits should,

at least, have been moderated.—Most probably, so they have; and the explanation of your not perceiving the fact is, that your improved principles are more sensitive to their evil. The *less* affects you now, more than the *greater* did formerly.—Besides, according to that great principle of corruption, discerned and confessed even by the heathen moralist, *nitimur in vetitum semper, cupimusque negata,* "the more that any thing is forbidden or denied us, always the more do we desire it, and strive to obtain it"—according to this law of evil, in proportion as your regenerated principles curb your old habits will they fret and put forth their remaining strength with force. Hear our *oracle:* "When the restraint of grace is newly laid upon corruption, it is no wonder if it acts more vigorously than before, 'warring against the law of the mind.' The motions of sin may really be most violent, when the new principle is brought in to cast it out."* The observation will equally hold good, when, in an advanced state of grace, the New man, meditating a revival, makes more strenuous efforts to repress or extinguish what of the

* Some may say, why not quote for proof *the* oracle; "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence" (Rom. vii. 8);—for whether this be regarded as referring to the case of a regenerated man or not, does it not affirm the principle contained in the quotation made in the text? (Ovid. Amor. iii. 4.) I am inclined to think it does. Almost all the older divines understood it in this sense; and Moses Stewart, who has disowned their authority so extensively in other respects, follows them here, making striking quotations from Calvin, Chrysostom, and Erasmus. He also instances Prov. ix. 17, as parallel: and adds to Ovid's a number of sayings of other heathen moralists. Nevertheless, not Macknight only, but Dod-

Old man remains, creating a commotion and war in your nature, such as you never before experienced; and occasioning your mistake of its being, at best, the commencement of your conversion.—Boston gives yet another utterance on the subject: "Temptations may be more in number, and stronger, while Satan is striving to bring you back, who are escaped, than while he was only endeavouring to retain you.—Pharaoh and his Egyptians never made such a formidable appearance against the Israelites as at the Red Sea, after they were brought out of Egypt." As before, the observation will apply to a case of revival, as well as to one of incipient grace.—Thus, at all points of your complaint, those things which you mistake as signs of declension, may be the most satisfactory indications of your improvement.

I proceed, in the Second place, to make some observations on those *imaginations*, and thoughts about sin, which, although they do not properly amount to a temptation to commit it, are yet regarded as being sinful themselves, and indicative of a profane, impure, or envious heart—if not altogether unregenerated, at least making no progress in holiness. I remark, first, that

dridge, and several others, without questioning that the *nitimur in vetitum* is a principle of corrupt nature, contend with arguments not easily answered, that such is not the principle affirmed in the present case. And Dr. Chalmers proceeds no further than to say, that the "remorse which follows in the train of any violation, is of itself a constant feeder of the mind with such suggestions and images as serve to renew the temptation to what is evil." In these circumstances I have abstained from quoting the passage as a proof of the principle stated in the text.

when the blasphemous saying which fell on your ear, as you passed along the street, has filled your mind with an image of horror, which continues to occupy it with a tenacity proportioned to your endeavours to expel it—how foolish it is, how unfair, to charge this against yourself as a sin! On the contrary, it is your sensitiveness to the divine honour which caused the blasphemer's words to make a deeper impression on your mind, than they did on that of your less sanctified companion.—But, independently of such thoughts being forced on you from without—as a thinking man, in your meditations, and investigation of the truth, by the constitution of your intellectual nature, what is opposite to the truth will often present itself to your mind, and with its images of deformity and horror annoy and distress you. Bunyan's imagination of the "selling of Christ" was of this character; but even *his* morbid mind did not account it a sin, till he thought he had given his *consent.* It is no doubt most painful to be subjected to the intrusion of those unwelcome guests: But since their presence is not your sin, I think you would rather submit occasionally to the affliction, than be classed with that ignominious number whose want of mental exercise, and dulness of imagination, together with want of moral sensibility, are the reason of their exemption.

It remains, that I advert here to a subject which is one of the greatest delicacy, but of such importance, that any professedly practical discussion of the question of Regeneration, which takes no special notice of it,

must be felt deficient, at that very point where many waited most anxiously for relief of their perplexity. And when, in the times of Augustine, for instance, it was the subject which above all others engaged the casuistical skill of the teachers of the church, how is it, that, in our days, scarcely even a whisper is to be heard on it, either from pulpit or press—expending to such an extent their time, and learning, and eloquence, on profitless dogmas and barren abstractions; and leaving multitudes of troubled minds without a word of counsel for the regulation of that passion which, more than any other that can be named, affects vitally the happiness and morality of the world?—Having formerly indited a few remarks on the subject with much care, I find that I cannot do better than reiterate them here.* They occur in an illustration of the difference between the Love of God as an object of love, and other species of Love. But they may be easily applied for the resolution of difficulties, when some minds, even of the highest and worthiest class, shall self-abhorrently question if they are regenerated, because of the existence or permanence of certain emotions and desires in their hearts of peculiar fervour.

"The saint's Love of God has nothing in it of the nature of that Affection of Appetite, by which so much of the love of earthly objects is characterized.—To those who take no interest in religious sentiments this may appear a foolish, if not an ungraceful stricture; but it

* See Discourses; First Series: No viii.

is one of the greatest consequence in experimental analysis.—It is far from being uncommon, that ingenuous and youthful minds complain of themselves, and are induced to question the genuineness of their religious profession, when they find, that a friend of the other sex engages their thoughts, both to a greater extent and more warmly, than is done by the Creator. And, in mistaken zeal, some of them will form resolutions to deny themselves to the fascinations of what they denounce as an idol; and thus wage a war of mortification against nature, which is not only most painful, but most perverse; being contrary to the will of the all-bountiful Framer of their constitution, who designed that these affections should constitute a principal element of their happiness; as well as subserve most important ends in the conservation and increase of the human family.—That the affections referred to may be indulged, and in tens of thousands of instances are indulged to a most unwarrantable and sinful excess, not to speak of what the world calls criminal, no one will deny. And it is far from being unlikely, that there is some young person present who needs to be warned and threatened, on the subject of that faith-crucifying and prayer-choking idolatry, which day and night engrosses the heart for a creature, excluding every other thought, enervating the mind, and incapacitating it for every other exercise. What I say is this—that, in consequence of the difference betwixt the natures of the two affections—that for the creature having always

the incentive of a physical constitution (not the less operative, that it is frequently as little suspected as confessed by the individual's self;—yea, so subtle is the influence, it will be indignantly disowned, with a kind of consciousness of purely mental love, such as Plato fabled), while that for the Creator is entirely spiritual, and generally the result of rational meditations—in consequence of this difference, there are almost of necessity, both more thoughts, and these more lively, expended on the creature.

"This greater number, and greater liveliness of thoughts, however, does not by any means prove, that the object is more strongly and deeply loved. Wilberforce, for example, expended more thoughts, I am persuaded, on our colonial slaves, than on his own children; Did he also love them more? The illustration is not quite to the point; but it is sufficient for shewing, that the greater multitude of thoughts does not evince the stronger love.—Let the young, therefore, employ discrimination in judging themselves. Although there are many who cannot be too deeply self-condemned as guilty of idolatry; yet there are others who, by their self-condemnation, dishonour at once the creative goodness of God, and his regenerating grace—the one, for having implanted these affections, and the other, for not having eradicated them. When principles are submitted to the test of action—when the love of the one comes into competition with the love of the other,—Which prevails? Love for God forbids that a young

man make his suit to an ungodly woman; or, that a young woman listen to the suit of an ungodly man. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," is equally the commandment of God as, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." And when natural affection pleads in behalf of the denounced object, if you shall yet, through the obedience of divine love, resist the pleading, and deny yourself as if it were by the "plucking out of a right eye,"—will not that love of God, with its comparatively few and less lively imaginations, be evinced stronger than the affection for the creature, notwithstanding the manner in which it had appeared to usurp, almost entirely, the dominion of your being.

These remarks will, I doubt not, incur the mockery of the profligate, and probably the censure of the prudish, many of whom themselves need much an exposure of the festering corruptions of their hearts. But, I am persuaded, they are calculated to relieve many ingenuous and troubled minds. Nevertheless, when with all the honesty and sympathy of an elder brother, yea with a father's anxiety, I assure you who belong to this class, that those emotions, which you are ready to deplore as being of most evil sign, are not sinful, when not voluntarily cherished by meditation, by pictures, by books, and private conversation with a confidential companion; yet, with equal earnestness, I warn you, that, being thus cherished they become deadly—O most deadly, how strictly soever the appearances of modesty may be externally observed.

In the Discourse from which the preceding extract has been made, I find a contiguous paragraph which equally admits of being applied for the removing of the doubts of another class of minds, who, from miscalculation, may be questioning their regenerated state. I, therefore, transfer it likewise.

"The love (or loving) of God has nothing in it of the nature of that Affection of Instinct, which is characteristic of the love of a mother for her infant child. The illustration here can be little else than a repetition of that which has been given of the Love of Appetite, with such a change of terms as is necessary to accommodate it to the new case.—That the idolatrous preference of children to the honour of God greatly abounds, is lamentably true; but there are some mothers who distress themselves on its account, whose self-condemnation is unwarranted. By the mechanism of her constitution, —whether of body or mind, or both, it is unnecessary to determine,—the image of her child is presented to a mother's heart with a frequency of thought, and a liveliness and warmth of affection, to which there is nothing corresponding, operating in favour of her love of God, which requires a voluntary exercise of judgment, and of abstract meditation. And, just as in the former case, so here, the few thoughts given to the Lord may indicate a deeper and stronger affection than the many which rise in favour of her child.—Try yourself with the imagination of a case—of your infant dying, as the one side of the alternative; and as the other—of his growing up to

manhood, to be wealthy, and learned, and respected by the world, but, by his infidelity and scepticism dishonouring God:—irrespective of the ruin it would bring on himself, and just because you love God, and are tender of His honour, do you feel, that your choice of the first condition of the alternative would be made without hesitation? Why then complain of yourself, that you idolize your child? Let your maternal feelings have their scope."

It has not only been in some respects delicate, but dangerous ground over which we have passed under the discussion of the whole of this topic; and it is not impossible that some will pervert the remarks which have been made, so that they shall become an occasion of stumbling to them—when they plead them as an excuse for sin, or relaxation of self-watchfulness. But, as stated before, I cannot help it, if the unworthy will abuse that which the worthy need and are entitled to. The consolation of the saint must not be sacrificed to the fear of furnishing the formalist and unprincipled with weapons which he may use for self-destruction. There is yet more of such critical matter before us.

(4.) When, after years of an exemplary life, a man shall commit even a very flagrant sin, it is not a proof, as the ignorant and censorious reckon, that he has declined in grace; much less, that all his former acts of devotion and charity, which they recount with mockery, were the actings of a hypocrite. He *may* have de-

clined, or he *may* have been a hypocrite; but equally it is possible, that, not only has he been truly regenerated, but, that he was growing in grace, up to the time of his fall. A temptation of much less strength than that of the one which has now vanquished him, might have caused his fall in an earlier part of his career; but which his more recent state of grace would have easily withstood. He who to-day was slain by Samson, may have been a stronger man this morning than he was ten years ago, when he foiled Goliath.—It is not so much the falling, as the lying still, which convicts either of former hypocrisy, or of present declension. —Besides, just as during a fever, or any protracted disease, the constitution of a youth will go forward to manhood, so that he shall rise from his bed more mature both in body and mind; so there are cases, in which, during a course apparently of apostacy, reflections and convictions were proceeding which were deepening and strengthening the principles, against the time of recovery from the delirium of temptation. Was not this the case with Solomon? (Eccles. ii. 9.) At all events, experience of a fall usually renders the future life more humble and watchful, and more zealous, under a determination to redeem the time: so as to confirm the doctrine, that increase of grace is the general rule.

(5.) When some one is observed, not occupying, so faithfully as he did once, some particular sphere of

duty at the Mission Board, for instance, or at the Sabbath classes, his neighbours are ready to suspect him of declension; and even he himself may complain, that his heart is not so strongly inclined to such duties as formerly.—What know *you*—you who censure the man—of all his life, private as well as public, that you take upon you thus to judge of him? First make yourselves sure, that he is not occupying some other sphere of as great importance.—And as for you, the self-accusing saint yourself, reflect, whether there be not some other department of duty, in which the Guardian Spirit is cultivating graces which were in danger of being neglected, when engaged in your former course; where He finished with you and for you, that work which he designed. Think of Boston's Tree: there is little so beautiful to be seen in figurative illustration. "Christians may mistake their case by measuring their growth by the advances of the top only, not of the root. Though a man be not growing taller, he may be growing stronger. If a tree be uniting with the ground, fixing itself in the earth, and spreading out its roots, it is certainly growing, although it be not higher than formerly. So, although a Christian may want the sweet consolations and flashes of affection which he once had; yet, if he be growing in humility, self-denial, and sense of needy dependence on Jesus Christ, he is a growing Christian: 'I will be as the dew unto Israel, he shall cast forth *his roots* as Lebanon.'"—But, besides top-growing and root-growing, there is growing towards the

east and towards the west, and casting forth one branch towards the south, and another towards the north, till all round about the tree is perfected in symmetry.

(6.) I observe, finally, under this topic, that some misinterpret afflictive dispensations of Providence, as a sign, that they are not growing in grace. Would we ever have been so heavily and repeatedly chastised, they say, unless the Lord had seen in us great evils which needed the correction?—I reply, that afflictions are frequently sent for prevention, rather than cure. Possibly you were making commendable progress; when the Lord saw a dangerous temptation approaching, and in mercy he laid you up out of its way, on a bed of protracted suffering.—Again I reply, that instead of being a sign of perverseness or sloth, afflictions are often the reward of diligence, that the faith may be more purely sublimed, in order to a peculiarly high degree of heavenly glory. In proportion to the manner in which the Father of the Faithful improved his trials was he tried the more; so that the Lord might have an opportunity of enlarging the promise, till its measure was made complete, after his faith had stood the test of the commandment to sacrifice Isaac.—Such are his dealings with *you:* when you lost your wealth you improved the affliction so well, that you were prepared not only to bear, but profit by, a heavier; so you were bereaved of your only child: that advanced your graces still further, till you were prepared for that bed on

which you lie, of poverty and hopeless disease. This has so spiritualized you, and is spiritualizing you more and more, that it must needs be a crown of distinguished glory which is destined for you in that kingdom, where the pure in heart shall see God; and more nearly, in proportion as they are pure.

I have thus explained, to the best of my ability, those appearances which are adverse to the doctrine of "growth in grace." But, observe, what is the form of it for which I contend: only that it is the *general rule.* The dogma, that it is always and necessarily progressive, is at once irrational, unscriptural, contradicted by facts, and morally, of most injurious influence. Did the tree of David's piety either consolidate or enlarge —did it grow either at top or bottom—did it send out branches either eastward, or westward, or southward, or northward, during the long time that intervened betwixt his crime "in the matter of Uriah," and the mission of the prophet Nathan? According to the dogma of necessary progression, either it did, or David was not regenerated previously to that mission; of which alternative I know not which term is the more objectionable. Not only do I admit, but contend, that the *principle* of grace all the while existed *latently* in David's heart; yet, equally, I contend, that it was not only, not progressing, but withering away, and would have died, unless it had been mercifully revived through the Lord's remembrance of the covenant of

his youth. Even an unbeliever will scarcely mock, I think, at this notion of a latent love, roused into action, after it had long lain dormant. How many, after a course of neglect and treachery, caused by the temptation of the profligacy of the city, have returned, and with confession of wrong, and expressions of even higher than first admiration, have renewed and fulfilled the village vows of former days?

I have already remarked that the Westminster Divines have affirmed that "growth in grace" is a benefit which flows from Justification, only in the same manner, that "assurance of God's love" flows from it, that is, generally, but not always—naturally, but not necessarily. But hear again our favourite *oracle*:—

"There is a great difference between the Christian's growing simply, and his growing at all times. All true Christians do grow, but I do not say that they grow at all times. A tree that has life and nourishment grows to its perfection, yet it is not always growing; it grows not in the winter. Christians also have their winters, wherein the influences of grace, necessary for their growth, cease. It is by faith the believer derives gracious influences from Jesus Christ; as each lamp in the candlestick received oil from the bowl, by the pipe going between them. (Zech. iv. 2.) Now, if that pipe be stopped; if the saint's faith lie dormant and inactive, then all the rest of the graces will become dim, and seem ready to be extinguished.

In consequence whereof, depraved nature will gather strength, and become active. What then will become of the soul? Why, there is still one sure ground of hope. The saint's faith is not as the hypocrite's, like a pipe laid short at the fountain, whereby there can be no conveyance: it still remains a bond of union between Christ and the soul; and, therefore, because Christ lives the believer shall live also. (John xiv. 19.) The Lord Jesus "puts in his hand by the hole of the door," and clears the means of conveyance; and then influences for growth flow, and the believer's graces look fresh and green again. (Hos. xiv. 7.) In the worst of times the saints have a principle of growth in them; "His seed remaineth in him." (1 John iii. 9.) Therefore, after decays, they revive again; namely, when the winter is over, and the Sun of Righteousness returns to them with his warm influences. Mud thrown into a pool may lie there at ease; but if it be cast into a fountain, the spring will at length work it out, and run as clearly as formerly."

As usual, this is striking and beautiful: but the oracle is human, and I question if all Christians grow even *simply*, by which we are to understand, I suppose, *upon the whole.* On the contrary, I am persuaded, that some, if not many, never rise above the babyhood of Regeneration, even when their lives are prolonged; and more than this, that some die in a state of declension, weaker than they were years previously.

As on some former occasions, so here, there are two classes on whose account I am earnest in pressing the consideration, that grace is not always or necessarily progressive. The *first* consists of penitent backsliders, who are ready to conclude, that all their former professions must have been hypocritical. Now, in a number of instances, it will be found insufficient to say, as has been recommended, "suppose these former professions *were* hypocritical; what does it signify? *begin now*,"—for some of them will reply, that they cannot conceive of themselves attaining to a much better state of feeling than that which they once possessed; so that if *it* was unsound, though they had recovered an apparently good state, they would suspect it of being as hypocritical as ever. They are thus liable to despair. The proper mode, therefore, of dealing with them is to argue, that their recent declension is not a proof of former hypocrisy; and to use their original well-being and well-doing as an encouragement, in this way,—that they may surely rise again as high, at least, in attainments, as the elevation which they themselves once mastered.

The *second* party, whom I have in view at present, consists of prosperous saints; and my word for them is one of warning.—Suppose that you are conscientiously certain of having been regenerated—a certainty which I admit may rest on good grounds; and, therefore, certain of ultimately reaching the kingdom of God, which, I admit again, is a conclusion legitimately drawn,—yet, without watchfulness and diligence, you

may, you will decline, and die weaker in grace than you are at present; so as to have a crown and principality of inferior glory assigned you, in the distribution of the honours of the kingdom. This is faith's common sense; not faith qualified by common sense, but common sense qualified by faith. When Arminius makes it a prominent article of his system, that "if David had died immediately after he had committed his twofold crime against Uriah, he would have been adjudged to eternal death," he speaks common sense, but without faith; when some unclean, self-denominated Calvinist may say, that it would not in any degree have affected his heavenly state, he speaks neither the one nor the other; when *we* affirm that the glory of his heavenly crown would have been greatly diminished, we speak both; or, rather, we vindicate at once the holiness and mercy of the covenant of salvation.

I return to the assertion and illustration of the General Rule, that the "new creature" having been produced a *child*, is gradually reared up into a *man*. The question is now, By what means?—The answer will not detain us long; since both Instrumentality and Agency, together with their modes of operation, are the same as in effecting the Birth.

(1.) We found that considerable difference of opinion exists among divines respecting the nature and extent of the work accomplished by the Instrumentality of the Word, in the act of Regeneration—some virtually

denying it the credit of being the generative *seed*. But all agree, that, in the work of Sanctification it is the only *aliment* of the new life. "As new-born babes," says an apostle, "see that ye set your hearts on the unadulterated milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby." (1 Peter ii. 2.)—When I say *all* are agreed about this, I mean, all whose opinions are worthy of a rational man's attention. From this class I exclude, of course, all impostors, whether Roman, Anglican, or Tulchan-Scotch, who pretend that they are able by their enchantments to make a bit of wheaten bread efficacious, through its own virtue, for the nourishment in holiness of an immortal mind:* or, who regard the sacraments as being profitable in any other way, than that, by their expressive symbolical *testimony*, they feed the soul with the truths of the Word.—"The flesh profiteth nothing," said Christ—though the table were furnished for the feast with my body, "truly, really, and substantially," as the antitype of the Son of Perdition will pretend to do, when he is revealed with all his band of traitors following. "The *words* which I speak to you"—*about* my flesh and blood—"*they* are spirit, and *they* are *life*." (John vi. 63.) *There* is the canon: and whosoever he may be that contradicts or perverts it, *anathema sit:*

* "May thy body, O Lord, which I have received, and thy blood, which I have drunk, *cleave to my bowels;* and grant that no stain of sin may remain in me, who have been fed with this pure and holy sacrament."—*Canon of the Mass.* "For this sacrament is not changed, as if it were bread and wine, into our substance; but, we, in a certain manner, are changed into the nature of it."—*Catechism for Parochial Clergy.*

and let all who follow with Christ pronounce their Amen.

(2.) Equally, all may be said to be agreed on the subject of the sanctifying *Providence* of the Spirit, continuing to provide favourable circumstances; and by its *ordering* of sermons, conversations with friends, reading of books, dreams, suggestions, etc., presenting to the mind truths formerly known, as well as truths new to it;—and *seasonably*, as the peculiar cases of individuals require:—for, according to the distinction formerly made, when the natural mental laws of Association or Suggestion are so regulated as to call up certain ideas, and awaken certain remembrances, this is rather of the Providence of the Spirit, than of his Inspiration.

(3.) The only disputable question is, about the need of that Inspiration, *causing faith*, being continued after Regeneration has been effected. Some may say,—now that the faith has been produced; or, supposing that much remains to be learned,—now that the disposition for receiving the Word has been generated, where is room for further work of Inspiration?—I ask, in reply, Who teaches that the work of Inspiration consists in the generating of a new disposition? The objection may have some force when pleaded by those who hold the pre-disposition theory; but has none when addressed to those who contend for that which has been adopted in these pages. I not only admit but maintain, that the Word, when *caused* to be believed, does, in the very

first instance, rectify much of the naturally evil disposition; but I maintain equally, that not a little remains uncorrected, making it necessary that there be a continuance of that *inflashing* of the truth into the inmost chamber of the soul, which we have already described; not only for causing the reception of new truths, but perpetuating faith in those formerly received. It is, therefore, that, according to a preceding representation, the Spirit having visited and entered the soul in the act of Regeneration, fixes in it his dwelling, that he may carry forward the work of Sanctification.

Though the illustration of this topic has been conducted with even more than an ordinary measure of practical application; yet there are a few points of great importance, some of which have not been noticed at all in this way, and others of which require to be noticed more specially. Our space, however, is being filled up so rapidly, that these notices must be made briefly.

FIRST; let the young beware of making unreasonable demands on themselves. I do not caution them against self-complaint and self-condemnation, so long as they detect the least deficiency in their characters; but only, against their adjudging themselves to be unregenerate and graceless, because they have not attained to the excellence of some aged saint, whose memoirs, for instance, they may have been perusing. Not to speak of the circumstance, that memoirs usually record all the good, and little of the evil of their subjects—it is

most unreasonable to demand of a child the prowess of a man.—I have especially in view the cases of those who are agitating the question of their regeneration, as candidates for the membership of the church, and a place at the sacramental table. Your inquiry ought to be, not so much about *strength*, as about *life*—about existence—as a breathing spiritual being—breathing, howsoever faintly, of divine and heavenly love.—I know of no better test by which you can try your heart than that which is supplied by John Newton, in his answer to the appeal of the Saviour, "Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou Me?"

> "Lord, it is my chief complaint,
> That my love is weak and faint;
> *Yet* I love Thee, and adore;—
> Oh for grace to love Thee more!"

This is admirably balanced betwixt humble confession of deficiency, and denial of the imputation of utter unworthiness. But it is valuable chiefly as containing an accurate representation of the state of the feelings of the apostle Peter.—I do not say, that you should be satisfied with yourself, if you have attained to his condition: Peter was everything but satisfied with himself: But this I say, that you not only wrong *him*, but wrong Christ who so graciously received him, if, being of like mind with him, you doubt your own reception.

"SECONDLY; since "*growth* in grace" is the general rule, let all examine themselves, if their profession will bear this test; and where it is found not to bear it, let

the case be regarded as being at best a suspicious one.—What a perversion of my design it would be were any one to say, that, since declension has been shewn to be compatible with a regenerated state, he need not trouble himself, though his character and feelings have undergone a great deterioration. Of such a one I decline the advocacy; and denounce him as being now, and as ever having been, utterly destitute of the holy principle. Sorrow for the declension, and resolution to amend, when the conviction of it is brought home to him, are necessary to evince that the original profession was genuine.

In conducting the requisite examination, let the principal question be, "have I grown in faithfulness of *obedience* to the divine commandment?" No observant reader of the preceding pages can mistake me, as setting light store by lively emotions and rapturous excitements:—they are most desireable, not only for their pleasure, but for their profit, and the manner in which they honour the Lord. Nevertheless, they are of a nature too volatile for forming a standard by which a man's principles may be determined, either for censure or commendation. The only sure judgment is that which is founded on progress or declension in the *solid* virtue of eschewing, with circumspection and tenderness of conscience, what the divine Law has prohibited; and prosecuting, with diligence and zeal, what the divine Law has enjoined.

When the tenor of the circumstances of your life is

so equable, that there are few trials by which the state of your principles is tested, it will be found profitable to *imagine* a scene of temptation, and consider its probable effects. You are now thirty-five years of age: suppose, then, that the fortune of business made you a sojourner for a season in Paris—If you feel, that your principles are so rooted and confirmed, that there is no doubt but that Sabbath after Sabbath you would be seen threading your way through the gay crowd, to that back court, down that narrow street, where Frederick Monod and his faithful band of brethren are assembled; whereas, the thought of your having been exposed, ten years ago, to the temptation of the heathenish carnival, makes you tremble for the probability that you would have apostatized—it is a good sign that you are growing in grace.

THIRDLY; I return to the counsel, that we be on our guard against Declension. According to any of the theories of Regeneration—either, that the work of the Spirit consists in the creation of a new disposition, in order to faith; or, that it consists in the communication of faith, in order to a new disposition—to account for declension in any degree, is a task of no ordinary difficulty. The difficulty, however, is less according to the latter theory, which consists more with responsibility for *cherishing* the truth which has been infused into the mind. But, whichever of them it may be that is adopted, both the Scripture and facts demonstrate, that, even in the case of the regenerated, the Spirit may be *grieved* by resistance; yea, that his work may be

quenched, all except being extinguished; so as to require an extraordinary intervention, oftentimes by some grievous affliction, for resuscitating the remaining spark; or, so that the backslider dies unrecovered, to enter into a condition of greatly diminished heavenly glory. Such being the danger even for those who are persuaded on good grounds, that they have been regenerated, I transcribe for their warning and direction, the following observations of Robert Hall, in his Letter on the Work of the Spirit:—

"Though a general attention to the duties of piety and virtue, and a careful avoidance of the sins opposed to these are certainly included in a becoming deportment to the Holy Spirit, perhaps it is not *all* that is included. The children of God are characterized in Scripture by their being 'led by the Spirit;' *led*, evidently not impelled, not driven forward in a headlong course without choice or design; but being by the constitution of their nature, rational and intelligent, and by the influence of grace rendered spiritual, they are disposed to obey at a touch, and to comply with the gentle insinuations of divine grace; they are ready to take that precise impression which corresponds with the mind and purpose of the Spirit. You are aware of what consequence it is in worldly concerns to embrace opportunities, and improve critical seasons; and thus, in the things of the Spirit, there are times peculiarly favourable, moments of happy visitation, when much more may be done towards the advancement of our

spiritual interest than usual. There are gales of the Spirit, unexpected influences of light and power, which no assiduity in the means of grace can command, but which it is a great mark of wisdom to improve.—

"Permit me to suggest two or three heads of inquiry. —You have sometimes felt a peculiar seriousness of mind, the delusive glare of worldly objects has faded away, or become dim before your eyes, and death and eternity, appearing at the door, have filled the whole field of vision. Have you improved such seasons for fixing those maxims, and establishing those practical conclusions which may produce an habitual sobriety of mind, when things appear under a different aspect?—You have sometimes found, instead of a reluctance to pray, a powerful impulse to that exercise, so that you felt as if you could do nothing else. Have you always complied with these motions, and suffered nothing but the claims of absolute necessity to divert you from pouring out your hearts at a throne of grace?—The Spirit is said to make intercession for saints, with groanings which cannot be uttered: when you have felt these ineffable longings after God, have you indulged them to the uttermost? Have you spread every sail, launched forth into the deep of the divine perfections and promises, and possessed yourselves as much as possible of the fulness of God?—There are moments when the conscience of a good man is more tender, has a nicer and more discriminating touch than usual; the evil of sin in general, and of his own in particular,

appears in a more pure and piercing light: have you availed yourselves of such seasons as these for searching into the "chambers of imagery," and while you detected greater and greater abominations, been at the pains to bring them out and slay them before the Lord? Have such visitations effected something towards the mortification of sin? Or have they been suffered to expire in mere ineffectual resolutions? The fruits which godly sorrow produced in the Corinthians are thus beautifully portrayed: "What carefulness it wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, yea what indignation, yea what fear, yea what vehement desire, yea what revenge!" —There are moments in the experience of a good man, when he feels a more than ordinary softness of mind; the frost of selfishness dissolves, and his heart flows forth in love to God and his fellow-creatures. How careful should we be to cherish such a frame, and to embrace the opportunity of subduing resentments, and of healing those scars and wounds which it is scarcely possible to avoid in passing through this unquiet world!"

The preciousness of these observations is excelled only by what Boston has so largely furnished us with on kindred topics: and yet I am persuaded that Dr. Chalmers would have pushed the practical lesson further. He would have uttered a warning that these visitations could not be resisted with impunity—that not only would they be vouchsafed more sparingly; but that by every act of resistance the heart would be ren-

dered more callous and insensible: so that not only would there be the missing of much gain, but the sustaining of deep loss.*

FOURTHLY; equally as in the preceding case, I return to a lesson of consolation. Let the penitent backslider take courage.—It is most becoming, that you should be a deeply afflicted man, when you think of broken vows, of injured love, and the manner in which you have dishonoured the cause of the best of Masters. But whenever you begin to speak of being apprehensive, that you have committed the "irremissible sin," it is the merest ignorance, or fatuity, or delusion of the Tempter. Whatever that sin may be, no one guilty of it was ever sorry that he had committed it. In remembrance, therefore, of your former piety, let your argument for recovery be, that you may surely at least *match yourself.*—Or, suppose that you find reason for concluding, that your former professions were made without principle, and hypocritically—then, so much the better, in one sense. Your recent misconduct cannot be chargeable with the heinousness of that of one who had been with the Lord, and departed from Him: and that recommendation to which we formerly referred is most suitable—that dismissing all profitless inquiries into the state of your views and motives in times past, you *begin now.* This night, as if for the first time, Confess the Lord, and join covenant with Him: and make this the date of your spiritual birth, beyond which you

* See Sermon, on Resisting The Spirit.

need not trouble yourself in going backward, when calculating afterwards whether you have "grown" or declined.

FIFTHLY; see the advantage of beginning soon. It is only for early piety, which proceeds forward vigorously till the end, that the diadems of the principalities of the ten cities are decreed; whereas, for death-bed conversion, though there were an assurance of obtaining it, the best of the prospect is some humble chaplet, worn in a village, among the honours of the kingdom. Great indeed will be the mercy:—

> The meanest place at his right hand
> Is infinite delight:—

But in the *comparative* lowliness there should be something, I think, to alarm the ambition of many, and rouse them out of their state of procrastination; yea, rouse many who are perhaps entitled to the character of being already converted, out of their state of sloth and formalism, and compromising betwixt spirituality and worldly-mindedness. Oh some of you, so proud of your wealth, and learning, and accomplishments, disciples of Christ though you are admitted to be, yet with your faith so thin and lank, how will you bide it, that some of those prayerful mire-soiled peasants, and wan Sabbath-school keeping needle-women, should, amid the applause of angels at the decision of the Judge, be preferred to the glory of the diadems, when all your award shall be the village chaplets? It is no fancy. If there be righteousness in God, and truth in his Word, it is a

scene which shall be extensively realized in that day, when the first shall be last, and the last shall be first. And I persist in asking, how will you bide it? Bide it! With your moral vision then purified, you will be the loudest to applaud it: but bleared as you are at present with the rheum of worldliness, how do you bide the *prospect* of it?—My peasant-brother, and needle-woman sister, keep *you* prayerful, diligent and aspiring. You have the start at present: "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

SIXTHLY; when the mother may be tempted to complain, that her promising child was removed from an opportunity of improving talents, in order to a high station in heavenly glory,—let her reflect, first, that the Lord may have foreseen evil instead of good, had that child been exposed to the temptations of the world; or, secondly, that, if he was removed for the profiting of others by the lesson, he will be advanced to all that height of glory which corresponds to the measure of improvement to which he would have attained, had he been permitted to live.—Similar reflections may be made on the case of the adult saint, who has been cut down in the midst of an active occupying of his talents. —But irrespectively of all such reflections, let rising murmurings be suppressed by the assurance, that the Righteous Judge will in that day vindicate his procedure to the entire satisfaction of all his saints.

SECTION SIXTH.

THE PROCURING CAUSE OF REGENERATION.

IN order to understand the question, What procures or gains Regeneration for any man? observe, that a renewed nature is an acquisition of the highest advantage. In opposition to this, the great multitude imagine, that a rectified and sanctified state of the affections must necessarily produce a life of gloom, of penance, and bondage: and feel as if it would be rather a meritorious act on their part, to lay open their bosoms to the Spirit of Holiness, and permit Him, so to speak, to gain out of them glory for God; than an act of unspeakable mercy, on his part, to bestow on them the moral renovation. Not only are they destitute of all desire to be sanctified, but they shrink from the idea of such a visitation of divine influence as would cause them the transformation: they deprecate Godliness as an affliction; and think there would be an end of all comfort and pleasure for them in this world, were they so unfortunate as to be converted.

In what respect is this representation exaggerated, or a caricature? Is it unlikely, that there is any one

present whom the intimation would alarm, instead of gratify, were he assured, that the Spirit of God is just about to commence producing such a change of mind in him, that he will abandon with disgust his present loose companionship, and humbly crave admission to the fellowship meeting for prayer and mutual edification—that he will commence the reading of sermons, and religious memoirs, and missionary intelligence, with even more relish than that with which he at present reads a novel or the newspaper—and that, instead of hasting to be rich, and hoarding up wealth, or expending it on the luxury and pride of life, he will begin to distribute it liberally for the relief of distress, the enlightening of ignorance, and the suppression of crime? Are there not thousands of such professing Christians as we have, whom the imagination of being converted after this sort would fill with dismay;—some of whom having been trained by pious parents could not sleep without obeying the habits of childhood, but who, having repeated the words of that prayer, "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me," were a voice from heaven to assure them, that the prayer was heard and would be answered, and that to-morrow they would rise possessed of the solicited holiness, would be disposed to protest, "Not so soon, at least, O Lord,—not so soon?"

In such a state of mind as this, it is impossible to comprehend the question, In consideration of what does the divine Justice bestow Regeneration? Those who

do not perceive it to be any benefit to a man's self, but only something which may contribute to the pleasure and glory of God, will ask with surprise, why does He not produce it by a power sent directly from his throne, without there being any need for a Mediator through whom, and for whose sake, it is conferred? It is, therefore, necessary, that we treat shortly of Regeneration being a boon to man of inestimable price. This has been done to some extent already, when the Necessity of Regeneration was the topic of illustration; but the subject presents itself again under another and broader form.

Observe, then, in the First place, that, unless he be regenerated, it is impossible for a man to escape the condemnation of God; and, equally, that, if he be regenerated, his deliverance is certain. Whatever may have been his former conduct and character, let him on the Judgment day present himself before the throne with a reformed, purified, and sanctified mind—wherever he may have found the reformation—it is impossible, that with such a character he can be consigned to misery. Approach, then, O sinner, and place yourself for a moment by the side of that dark gulph of perdition, and hear the dismal sounds of lamentation and despair which come up unceasingly amid the "smoke of the torment." Deceive not yourself—let no man deceive you: *that* is certainly your own doom, if you continue worldly and ungodly. God's word declares it; and the award is neither unjust nor severe. If you

were God—I repeat it—were *you* God, would you spare the man who slighted, insulted, and defied you, as you slight, and insult, and defy the Almighty? Suppose you were personally inclined, *could* you do it consistently with your dignity and duty as a king in the administration of a government? You could not. But as certain as is your punishment, if you persist in your despite; so certain is your deliverance, if you attain to a regenerated state of heart. How precious, then, is that Regeneration! How earnestly to be sought after, in whatever quarter it may be found! How great the gift, should any one secure it for you!

Observe, in the Second place, that, unless he be regenerated, it is impossible for a man to gain admission into the heavenly kingdom; and, equally, that, if he be regenerated, it is impossible that he be excluded from its enjoyment. A second time, then, thou sinful one, come and contemplate another scene: "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?—These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in his temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears

from their eyes." Is not yonder land covetable as an inheritance, after death has extruded you from this? Well, I again appeal, if *you* were God, would you bestow it on one who had slighted, insulted, and defied you, as you defy Him? This much then is certain, that, mock at the threatening of Hell as you may, as an unregenerated man you will, at least, be excluded from the kingdom of Heaven—to wander, at best, in destitution and beggary, as I formerly expressed it, without a door at which to knock for alms, through the wastes of a dreary Eternity; unless your soul be extinguished in wrath on account of its offensive impurity, as a defilement of God's creation. Is it not dreadful, that this is certainly the very best, which by any possibility, can be the doom of ungodliness? But equally is it certain, that, in the event of your regeneration, that kingdom of unfading happiness and glory shall be made yours with the richest welcome. How precious, then, again, is that Regeneration!—And when we consider at once the certain misery which the want of it entails, and the certain happiness which the possession of it ensures, how shall we sufficiently characterize the folly of that man who does not make the acquisition of it the first and principal object of his life? Though it were of itself the most distasteful and bitter of drugs, yet, since the medicine is so salutary, containing the influences of eternal life, who but a child would refuse its death-preventing, life-giving, immortalizing draught?—But how mistaken, how false, how injurious is the representation, when

many think and speak of Regeneration as if it were a bitter cup for this world, to the drinking of which no wise man would submit, but for the necessities of the world to come?

Observe, therefore, in the Third place, that Regeneration is valuable for its own sake, and would be covetable for the present life, though there were no hereafter. When the unbelieving and worldly allege or imagine, that a religious life consists of nothing but self-denial, and penance, and mortification, and whatever else is vexing for the flesh and wearisome for the spirit, they make the charge on the ignorant presumption, that there can be no pleasures but those which gratify *them*—their balls, and routes, and theatres, and gambling, and debauchery: and when they see the saints abstaining from such things, they affect to pity them, as if they could have nothing else in which it is possible to find delight. But what signifies it, in forming a judgment in this matter, though *their* depraved minds cannot comprehend how there can be any pleasure in life, in the absence of such indulgences? And what signifies it, though they wonder and stare in incredulity at any one saying, that he finds a wide field of enjoyment in the exercises of religion? When the inquiry respects a man's happiness, the question is not, Whether he be possessed of what gratifies *you?* but, Whether he be possessed of pleasures which gratify *him*, as much as yours gratify you?—Accordingly, though the christian is shut up from many things in which the worldling

revels, he is admitted to other pleasures in their stead, which are as gratifying to his regenerated taste, as are those of the natural man to his depraved and vitiated taste. When the one chants with glee his loose or bacchanalian song, in the midst of his dissipated companions; the other may, with as joyous feeling, I ween, be singing a hymn in praise of his Redeemer, in company with brethren ransomed from the world's follies and sins:—When the one is away to the race-course to delight himself with its cruelties; is it difficult to conceive of the other being as pleasantly engaged in visiting the abodes of indigence, and witnessing the happiness which his alms-giving communicates?—When the one at the theatre enjoys the scenic representation of some bloody murder; may not the other be as pleasantly occupied by some death-bed, in ministering the triumphs of faith to a soul about to pass into eternity?—And when the one lies on his bed, and delights himself with the fancy of that splendour and high station in the world, to which by the success of his speculations he hopes to attain; the other may be surely as joyous in the anticipation of that time when he shall be raised to a principality in the kingdom of God.—It is thus that the christian neither shares, nor desires to share, the enjoyment of the pleasures of the worldling, but possesses others which, in their sweetness and dignity, far more than compensate for them.

Although, then, religion had demanded of its disciples the surrender of much that is naturally and truly

pleasurable, yet they would have had no ground for complaint, since it opens up for them so many other sources of enjoyment.—But when profane men are accustomed to mock at the superstitious weakness and cowardice which submit to so many restrictions, we claim, that they state, with some precision and particularity, what those restrictions are to which they refer. What pleasure is there, even according to their own estimate of pleasure, which our faith denies us? Let them mention one which will bear to-morrow morning's reflection, and we engage to shew that the saint is not forbidden to enjoy it. Is he forbidden to taste of the fruit of the vine, and to be merry with his friends? Did not his Master sanction the conviviality by his presence, —yea minister to it by a bountiful exercise of his power?—Is he forbidden to lead about a wife in honourable wedlock, under the clear shining of the sun,—so unlike the infidel, who curses star-light and lamp-light, in the prosecution of his low and guilty amours?—Is the saint prohibited from being a musician, or a poet, or an astronomer, or a botanist, or a student of any department of science whatever? Surely that Nature which his Father has framed is as patent for his contemplation, as for the unbeliever's; while he has a principle of devotion within his heart which capacitates him for a sweeter relish of its pleasures. O, there be men, scarcely able to write their own names, who, because they have contrived to spell through the ill-written pamphlet of some profligate atheist, will set themselves

forward as persons emancipated from the thraldom of superstition, and talk about the narrow-mindedness of christians, as if Newton had been no philosopher, Milton no poet, and Hampden no patriot; and as if Thomas Paine had been a scholar; and as if Robert Owen, who mocks at the remembrance of his mother's virtue, were possessed of the common properties of a man! Brethren, I warn you again,—"Beware of dogs."—I will tell you in what consists the liberty of the infidel, beyond that of the christian:—he is at liberty to gain for himself the ruined character, the desolated fortune, the palsied frame, and the untimely death of a drunkard:—he is at liberty to gain for himself the violent death of the murdered duellist, or the Cain-like conscience of his murderer:—he is at liberty to gain for himself the shame and torment of the public exposure and unrelenting vengeance of his paramour whom he has betrayed and cast off—she too a haggard monument of the light-hearted, mocking ungodliness of her sex; or to gain for himself that rottenness of bones which is the fruit of his profligacy:—see him as he goes—there is your man of pleasure who mocks the saint for his gloomy and slavish superstition!

We have not yet done: Whose system is it which ministers better to its disciple's comfort in the day of adversity? When his houses have been burned; when his ships have been wrecked; when his crops have failed; when his trade has been desolated; when his child has died; when he is racked with disease,—

whence comes alleviation of his woes for the infidel? Has unbelief any physician, with any healing balm for him? On the contrary, it only aggravates his misery with the threatenings of a wo, of which his present sorrows are but a gentle earnest. And who shall accuse the wretched man of much inconsistency, if, by the perpetration of *that last crime*, he should endeavour, though vainly, to obtain the respite of insensibility, for a season at least, from the agony of his despair? What a system that must be, for which the horror of suicide is a laudable consistency!—With the despairing infidel contrast the hopeful saint, as he mingles his tears with smiles, and alternates songs of joy with his groans: "It is my Father's doing;" he says, of his afflictions;—"can anything hard proceed from that hand which has already parted with a Son for me; yea, from that hand which has been nailed to the tree for me? That Cross is my master-demonstration, over all adverse appearances, that not only is nothing sent me which comes not with a merciful design, but that it is the best gift which I could receive. How it works for my good I do not understand —what it gains for me, and what it saves me from; but that which I know not now I shall know hereafter: meanwhile, I believe; and believing, gratefully adore." Wonderful indeed is the alchymic power of christian faith, when, in the loss of fortune, the loss of health, the loss of his child, the loss of liberty, yea, the loss of character, the christian can discern *favours;* and when death itself, to others the king of terrors, he can welcome

as a friendly messenger, on an errand of his Father, to conduct him home. This is no fanciful representation of the power of christian principle. Multitudes every day and every night enjoy the triumph. The profane may call it a delusion; but this does not much affect the argument; the demonstration remains, that the christian is a happy, yea, the happiest, yea, the only happy man.

Some additional illustrations may be found in the volume from which the few preceding pages have been extracted.* But enough has been produced for the present object; and I resume the course of our argument.

Reflect, then, *first*, over the whole expanse of its benefits, of what advantage it is to be regenerated:—in respect of the future, what salvation there is in it from misery, and what securing of blessedness;—and, in respect of the present, what salutary restraint from what is discreditable and ruinous, without the denial of any truly desirable pleasure—what opening up of new sources of enjoyment; what dignity and grace of virtue; what sweetness of a good conscience; what sense of the divine love; what commendation of all good men; what contentment and hopefulness under adversity; what triumph in death!—Reflect, *secondly*, how man is utterly inadequate to work out this great change of heart and character for himself; and that no agent, except the Spirit of God, is competent to the

* Discourses: First Series. The Christian Life not Melancholic.

task: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then, may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil."—Reflect, *thirdly*, what laborious and self-denying work, to speak humanly, it requires of that gracious Spirit, to enter these dens of impurity; and, resisted and insulted, as He is, to clear out all the abomination! How is it that the saints are scarcely ever heard to speak of the Spirit's love? Great was the love of the Father in sending his Son to die; and great was the love of the Son who came so willingly on the errand:—is the love of the Spirit less, who has descended to this world of pollution and misery, and *abides* in it so long at the work of its purification and comfort?—Reflect, now, *fourthly*, and specially, that all this amount of benefit is necessary for convicted *rebels*,—giving occasion to the question, how shall the divine government, consistently with its rectitude and dignity, bestow the benefit on persons of such a character?—We answer, only in the manner that pardon is bestowed; through a Mediator who has made satisfaction for their violation of the law.

I have studiously reserved for consideration till now, a passage of Scripture which has repeatedly presented itself as useful for illustration and proof in other departments of the discussion; but which, I perceived, could be introduced with more effect here. There is not another more interesting in the Sacred volume, on account of the manner in which it comprises, in a few sentences, a complete system of christian theology. It

occurs, Titus iii. 4-7. The apostle, having heavily arraigned human nature of its depravity, proceeds to give an account of the method of salvation as follows:

> But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Notwithstanding the interest with which I anticipated the investigation of this passage, the exhausted state of our pages, when yet so much matter remains to be introduced, requires that I limit myself to a few notes.—Observe, then, *first*, the ultimate object to be gained. It is the heavenly kingdom, set forth under the character of "Eternal Life."—Observe, *secondly*, what is represented as being necessary for this: it is that we "be made heirs according to its hope." It is not the *constituting* of us heirs, which is referred to: that, as we shall presently see, is indicated in the preceding clause; and the idea here is that of *qualifying* our heirship,—making us heirs of a certain character,—according to the hope of eternal life. Mark that "according:" there is great pregnancy of meaning in it. It denotes the education and training which a discreet father will give his heir, *in correspondence* with the nature of the estate which he designs for him, that he may be able either to enjoy or manage it. If a father have two estates, one of lands, and the other of

ships on the sea, to be bestowed severally on his two sons,—by observing which of them it is he gives the agricultural education, and which of them, the mercantile, you could easily judge what is the destination of the two heritages respectively. The rule of discretion is indeed often violated by foolish fathers in this world. But it is strictly observed by God in the treatment of His children. The inheritance which He has in reserve for them being heavenly, the education which He gives them is heavenly-minded: and it is effected "by the washing of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost;" which you will again mark carefully, is represented as being a great *salvation.*—Observe, now, *fourthly,* in this tracing of the order of causes, what is represented as necessary for gaining that spiritual education. The circumstance of its being "shed on us *through* Jesus Christ," would have warranted the inference, that it must be communicated *for his sake.* But the matter is not left to depend on mere inference: it is stated expressly, that "being justified" is a prerequisite for being "made *such* heirs," as has been described. The concatenation is very beautiful; and I lament, that, for the reason already assigned, I am precluded from amplifying the illustration.

I conclude this department of the subject with these two simple appeals; *first,* If we see holiness to be a salvation, and that so precious, that we do not wonder the Scripture should represent the death of Christ as

being necessary to gain it for us: *secondly,* If we feel ourselves to be under such a process of education as indicates, that we are destined for the heavenly inheritance.—There being such a correspondence betwixt the inheritance, and the education which a wise and discreet father gives his heir, you may learn the nature of the inheritance by observing the quality of the education. Well, what sort of a kingdom the heavenly one must be, if some of those persons are under training for it, who claim the character of being its heirs—what a kingdom of meanness, frivolity, selfishness, pride, envy, contention, and impurity! No, brethren, it is a kingdom of holy love and adoring song; and it is an education of love and praise, by which God makes all his children meet to be partakers of its felicity.

SECTION SEVENTH.

THE MANIFESTATION OF REGENERATION.

WHEN I proceed to treat of the indications which a soul makes of its having undergone the salutary change, so that a man's friends, but especially a man's self, may determine if he be a participant of its salvation, I feel the task to be one of the *extremest* delicacy. If executed injudiciously, either, on the one hand, may the saint of tender conscience be stumbled and disheartened, through the standard being raised too high; or, on the other, the formalist may be cherished in delusion, through its being reduced too low. At the same time, therefore, that I shall use my best endeavour to discriminate with accuracy, let me admonish you, brethren, with more than usual earnestness, that as protestants, yea, as professed bible-christians, the responsibility lies mainly with yourselves, as well for determining what are proper tests, as for applying them to your own experience and conduct, and judging what is the result.

In the discharge of my duty as your helper in this critical work, I shall classify my observations under

the four following heads: First, Things which prove, or give grounds for suspecting, that Regeneration has not yet been effected: Second, Things which some mistake as sufficient to prove it: Third, Things which some mistake as necessary for proof: and Fourth, Things which are necessary and sufficient for making the demonstration satisfactory.—It is evident, that the illustration of these points must consist to a considerable extent of a *resumé*, or gathering up into an orderly form, of *practical applications* which are scattered throughout the argumentative discussion of the previous topics. Nevertheless, besides the different aspect under which some old truths will present themselves, so many new will claim our attention, as will sustain the interest, I trust, till the close of the illustration.

FIRST, *Things which prove, or give grounds for suspecting, that Regeneration has not been effected.*

Viewing the matter then, generally, is it not a suspicious case, if there be any professor, who, although his ceremonial observances are regular and exemplary, yet conducts himself in all other respects, in such a manner, that there is nothing in the mode of managing his business, nothing in the order of his family, nothing in the selection of his company, nothing in his conversation, either in respect of the subjects on which he speaks, or the sentiments he expresses, nothing in the choice of books for his reading and a place in his library, nothing in the preference of objects for his

charity, in which you can perceive the least difference betwixt him and his decent respectable neighbour, who distinctly avows his infidelity among his more intimate friends?—In the comparison, I make great allowance, on the one hand, for his unbelieving neighbour, having through hypocrisy, or courtesy, or the force of educational habits, assumed many of the features of the regenerated character; and on the other, for the sabbath-day professor himself, concealing, through cowardice, features which truly belong to him: but after all possible allowances have been made, is it not singular, that, with all your watching, you cannot descry in word, work, gesture, or look, a symptom of difference between the principles of the two men, if yet it be true, that they differ so essentially as, that the one has been regenerated by the Spirit of God, while the other remains dead in the original state of nature? Is this easily conceivable? On the contrary, is there not reason for concluding, that, being so like one another in their external conduct, they do not differ from one another in their internal principles?

In this state of matters, then, the professor must submit to his being *suspected* by his neighbours, at best: and before he can complain justly of their being uncharitable, he must give clearer indications of there being that great difference between him and an unbelieving world which regeneration effects.—Nevertheless, it is admitted, that the *principle* of regeneration may exist when neighbours have good reasons for suspecting

it to be wanting; and, I doubt not, that some will in that day be confessed of the Lord, to the astonishment of their neighbours, who had treated them as aliens; but respecting whom those neighbours will confidently appeal to the Judge, if it was possible for them to discern such persons' discipleship, so as to treat them as brethren; and that the Judge will sustain the excuse, admitting, that even the greatest human charity was incapable of perceiving it; and that it was discoverable only by omniscience.—We must, therefore appeal to the professor himself. Although your neighbours cannot see any difference betwixt you and the respectable unbeliever, do you perceive a difference yourself? Do you *feel* it? Are there private prayers, and meditations, and reflections, and longings, and regrets in your life, which can have no place in that of an infidel? And, in reference to that state of your conversation on which I lately remarked, are you prepared to plead, that it arose from shame or some similar cause;—that you felt inclined to give utterance to other sentiments, but, in the particular circumstances suppressed them,—and that these were such sentiments of sanctity, that they could not possibly have a place as well in the bosom of your unbelieving friend?—Well, suppose you can answer this appeal in the affirmative;—that you are conscious, notwithstanding appearances of identity, that there is a wide difference between your neighbour's principles and yours—though there is some comfort in our being assured of it, yet, let me admonish you, that

matters are far from being in a satisfactory condition. Independently of the pain you occasion christian friends, and your profitlessness to the cause of religion, yea the stumbling block which you are in the way of many—how troubled, I know, you are in your own spirit! Though you may have as much evidence as saves you from the self-condemnation of being undoubtedly destitute of all gracious inspiration; yet, equally you have not so much as warrants you to conclude, that you have undoubtedly, yea probably, received it. Even in your own judgment, the case must appear a suspicious one: so as to call on you to take measures for having your faith so invigorated, if you are indeed possessed of it in any degree, that its manifestations shall no longer be of their present doubtful and equivocal character. If not for the satisfaction of others—though, why scorn their opinion?—for the satisfaction of yourself, "give diligence to make your calling and election sure." (2 Peter i. 5.)

Having made the foregoing general observation, I proceed to a more definite notice of a few particulars which either prove, or give grounds for suspecting, that Regeneration has not been effected.

(1.) For a warrant of the following judgment, we must again revert for a moment to the consideration of what was so largely illustrated, when treating of the Instrumental Cause of Regeneration. This we found to consist of the Truth revealed in the Bible: from

which it follows conclusively, that no man who is careless about that Truth can be regenerated. You will observe, brethren, that I have expressed myself cautiously. I have not yet said, that want of a personal study of the Bible itself, is proof of an unregenerated state. I shall say what is akin to this, after having made some necessary exceptions. There are the blind and uneducated who cannot read; there are those who cannot obtain possession of the book; and there are those to whom the despotism of the tyrant, and the man-blasphemy of the slave-holder, and the saint-blasphemy of the Man of Sin, deny its emancipating perusal. Of all such we can only say, that carelessness about scriptural truth as communicated and explained by others, is unquestionable evidence of their being unregenerated. But in the case of all others —who are able to read, who are possessed of the Bible, or to whom it is accessible, and who are not deterred from its perusal by any acknowledged authority—want of a personal, reverent study of its pages, if not a decided proof of unregeneracy, gives grounds for, at least, a deep suspicion of it. Should it be objected, that he who sees may be regenerated, as well as he who is blind, by the preaching of the Word, without the reading of it—my reply is, that the regenerate principle in the blind man makes him lament that he cannot enjoy "the sincere milk of the Word," by direct application to the sacred fountain; makes the reading of that Word to him by his wife one of the happiest

of his marriage prospects; and makes him wait with lively expectation for the time when his first-born shall be qualified by education for the ministry to his wants.

Let it be observed, that I do not place the want of a personal study of the Scriptures, as giving ground for suspecting a regenerated state, on a level with the neglect of other commanded duties. I place it much higher in the scale of condemnatory evidence. It is that duty which is the mother-parent and mother-nurse of all others—without which they could not have had existence; without which they would expire. "My words they are life," said our Lord; and there is nothing else which gives or sustains it. It is astonishing, that some persons should so self-delusively speak a kind of peace to their minds, saying they are not sure, if they are regenerated—as if it were possible they may be; when yet in the nature of things they cannot, since they make no use of the only instrument which produces it. As well might a man think it possible, that he had slain his enemy, when he had not yet drawn his sword.

Let this, therefore, be a settled point, that, although, as we shall afterwards see, presence of interest in the Bible is not of itself proof of a regenerated state, yet is absence of interest in it a certain proof of an *un*regenerated state.—But this is not all: a man might assure us, that he studied the Bible daily with great interest, when yet, in consequence of our detecting,

that there were certain parts of it which he treated with neglect, we would feel it necessary to conclude, that he was as little a subject of the regenerating influence, as if he were careless about the whole of its contents. When treating of the Instrumentality of the saving change we found, that although all Scripture, given by inspiration of God, is profitable for aiding in the work, and cherishing the new-born mind, yet is there a special truth, characteristic of the Bible, and essential to its system, without the belief of which the change cannot be accomplished. It is the doctrine of God's method for the pardoning of a sinner—the doctrine of reconciliation with the divine government, through faith in the blood of Christ, considered as shed for the remission of sin: so that, although the man should feel much interest in the antiquities of the Bible, the history and biography of the Bible, the prophecies and proverbs and poetry of the Bible, if yet he feel it a dry and unentertaining book, when those passages present themselves which direct the guilty to the Lamb of God, for the pacifying and cleansing of the conscience; and begins to yawn, and hastens over them, or omits them altogether —there is as much reason for concluding that he is unregenerated, as for making the same conclusion respecting his neighbour who never reads a verse. What does it signify, though you delight in the narrative of the Bible's wars, if you feel no interest in the announcement of the Bible's salvation?

Were it not for the opportunity which the answer

gives to state two important truths, I would not notice the objection—that a man may have already mastered all the knowledge contained in the Bible, so that he does not require any more reading of it. Well, suppose such a phenomenon should make its appearance: *first*, truth lies latent in the mind and inoperative till excited to action by a re-presentation of its objects; and *secondly*, the Bible is to a regenerated heart like a lover's letter; yea it is a lover's letter itself; and your professions of love are much to be suspected when you cease reading it, though you may be able to recite its every word.

Finally, here; unless it be among the exceptions stated, I ask if any of us know any person, of whom we are well persuaded that he is regenerated, but of whom we know that he never reads the Scriptures, not even on a Sabbath day, unless it may be the preacher's text? Observe the state of the question: I refer not to that charity which prevents an adverse judgment; but to that justice which calls for a favourable decision: and further, I do not impute, at present, such neglect of God's Word as a sin to him; but ask, if, from what you perceive in him, and know of him in other respects, you are persuaded that he is regenerated. If you have any such persuasion, then, either is your discernment dull and easily imposed on by hypocrisy; or your estimate of moral qualities is such, that I fear I must decide, that you need to be regenerated yourself. The charity of some men convicts them of want

of principle, as clearly as bigotry convicts others. It is as profane to bless him whom the Lord curses, as to curse him whom the Lord blesses. (Psalm x. 3.)

As a corollary to the above, though I do not speak on the subject with such peremptoriness, I suggest, that that man has strong reasons for doubting that he is regenerated, and that his neighbours have grounds for suspecting him, who takes no interest in Religious Books, written by pious though uninspired men: and who, when he devours files of newspapers, and triad after triad of volumes of novels, would mock at it as most preposterous, were any of his christian friends to send him a volume of sermons, in the expectation that he would read such a book on a week-day. What right have God, and his soul, and eternity to trouble *him* on a week-day?—Are they not curious persons, brethren, some who claim to be regarded as christians! —And what shall we say of those who make such slack work of observing those Sabbath ordinances which have been divinely instituted, for conveying the regenerating and sanctifying Word with special force to the conscience and affections? What dare we say of them less than this—that well may they suspect themselves as being yet "carnal," without any of the appetites and tastes of the New man; and that it requires of others much charity to forbear pronouncing on them the sentence of the unconverted?

(2.) When I notice in the Second place, that the want of a spirit of Prayer is a decided proof of an unregenerated state, it is, as in the preceding case, not merely because it is a commanded duty, and a certain consequent of Regeneration; but also, because it is usually one of the means by which it is secured; it being the ordinary rule of the divine government, that this new heart is bestowed in answer to prayer. (Psalm li. 10; Luke xi. 13.) When there has been no asking of it, therefore, there is reason for suspecting, that it has not been given.—Although, however, we may not speak so decidedly of the want of prayer being evidence of an unregenerated heart, by the rule of its being invariably a necessary *precedent*, as a cause; yet, the conclusion is certain, when drawn from the premises which lie in the other direction, that prayer is invariably a *consequent* of Regeneration, as an effect. To such an extent, indeed, is this the case, that the Spirit of Regeneration cannot be better described in one sentence, than by calling it a Spirit of Prayer. It is the necessary effect of the heart's awakened sensibilities to its wants and necessities; of the new views which it has received of God as an object of confidence; of its being alive to his invitations to pray; and, when worldliness may at a time blunt its sensibilities, of its being alive to his imperative commandment. If, then, that which is so necessarily a consequent, be not discoverable in any particular case, we may be certain, that the producing cause does not exist.

How many times, and in what particular forms, a man should pray, I do not prescribe; but, setting aside your church prayers, and family prayers, and blessings and thanksgivings at meals, and prayers by the sick bed, and funeral prayers, and fellowship meeting and sabbath-class prayers, and prayers when yourself and child were threatened with death, and, not less, your prayers written in a diary, and your evening and morning prayers, the habit of which you acquired under the pious training of your childhood—setting aside all such praying, as of little consequence in this inquiry, I appeal to your own consciousness, if yours can with any propriety be called a "a praying heart;" characterized by its breathing of dependency on God. If it cannot, I wonder, when the case is so clear, that you should say, you are uncertain whether you are regenerated. As well might we speak of fire without heat, or of a fountain without water, or of life without breath, as speak of a regenerated heart without prayerful aspirations to the Majesty and Mercy of God.

(3.) I notice, in the Third place, as an evidence of an unregenerated heart, its want of preferring the Saints to all persons of merely worldly character—preferring the poor of the one class to the rich of the other, the mean to the noble, the illiterate to the learned, the rude in manners to the polished, the foreigner to your fellow countryman, him of an opposite faction to the patriot of your own party, the more spiritual of another

sect to the less spiritual of your own—preferring them in your admiration, your esteem, and your sympathy. This is, at some points, a severe trial; but Regeneration is fitted to bear trials; trials even more severe than any which have been mentioned; it will enable a mother to prefer another woman's son.—Yet, again, when I instance the inability to stand this test as being an evidence of an unregenerated state, I do so, not so much on the comparatively rude principle that we are *commanded* to prefer "the household of faith," (Gal. vi. 10) as for the following reasons: First, that a regenerated heart will naturally seek to its own spiritual kindred for sympathy, and community of feelings and interests: "blood," says the proverb, "is thicker than water," but "grace" is still stronger than blood; "there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."—Secondly, that it estimates men's worth and excellence by new standards —their honourableness of birth and connection, by their being children of God, and kinsfolk of Christ—their comeliness, by their holiness—their learning, by their skill in the science of salvation—and their wealth and station, and the honour and privilege of being connected with them, by their prospects as heirs of the heavenly kingdom. And in proportion as by these rules the regenerated heart esteems the saint, does it undervalue and despise the worldling, pity only qualifying the feeling, though he should be a prince on a throne. Thus felt Christ from whom the Spirit of Regeneration proceeds; thus felt Paul, and Luther, and Knox, and

Cromwell, into whom that Spirit entered; and thus, in some degree, feel all regenerated men. You will understand, then, for yourself, if you are of their number. When the world knows not the children of God, just as it knows not Christ himself, if *you* discern their lineage, and appreciate them accordingly, so as to approve yourself to be a kindred spirit, then all is well. But, if, on the contrary, you pass by them in neglect, not to speak of any mockery of the "little ones" of their brotherhood, and lavish all your admiration, and honours of respect and deference on that world which is at enmity with God, once more I wonder how you can feel any difficulty in determining whether or not you are of the regenerated number. Is it not something as absurd, as it is insolent, to suppose, that by any possibility you may be one of those adopted sons of God yourself, when you treat his family so despitefully; and reserve all your esteem, and honours, and sympathy for his enemies? Might not the exercise of a little common sense determine the question by one simple reflection? Depend upon it, your Regeneration is yet to seek; and you will know it, so soon as you find it, by the manner in which your heart will turn with love, esteem, and respect to the poorest and rudest of those whom you at present contemn, discerning them to be God's children—his children in disguise, for whom there is decreed a day of glorious "manifestation," when they shall be made like to their Lord, and reign with Him in his kingdom. (1 John iii. 1, 2.)

(4.) I notice, in the Fourth place, a want of interest in, and of preference and help of, the Christian Cause, as a decided proof of an unregenerated state. There are churches, sabbath-schools, missions, bible and tract societies, all needing help and support. You sneer—do you? Well, the proof is complete; as complete, to me at least, as if I already heard your wail coming up from the prison of the reprobate. And the more that you may be liberal and public spirited in other directions, the more does indifference here indicate your unregeneracy; for, had your conduct generally been selfish, we might have thought, that, in refusing a contribution for missions, or answering the application with such an insulting pittance, it was *avarice* which was wrong with you; but your other charities, proving that this vice does not stand in the way of your being attentive to the interests of the institutions of the Gospel, shut us up to the conclusion, that the disease of your heart is *unbelief*. A heart regenerated loves God, and therefore, the means by which He is glorified; it loves Christ, and therefore, the means by which He is gratified and honoured; it loves the Holy Ghost, and therefore, the means by which hearts are secured for Him, in which He may complacently dwell; it loves the Bible, and therefore, the means by which its fame and conquests are extended; it loves the Church, as a patriot loves his country, and therefore, the means by which its interests are prospered, and its glory is made great; it loves the souls of men, and therefore, the

means of their salvation; it loves holiness—has a taste for its scenes, and therefore, the means by which it is produced; it abhors sin, and therefore zealously co-operates with christian brethren in the work of its destruction.—Since, then, you are destitute of the necessary consequences of the regeneration of the heart, the producing cause can have no existence within your bosom.—And pretend not, that you admit the legitimacy of the reasoning, as a general principle, but deny the justice of its special application;—that you love God, and all the other objects enumerated, but question if these sabbath-schools, and all those societies which have been *gotten up* in such numbers, are proper means for effecting the desired ends; and that you suspect—yes, upon your honour as a gentleman, you do, that these missionaries fabricate tales for extorting money from the credulous; but that you are too knowing to be duped like the rest of us.—Wretched man! it is but an accumulation of the proof of your reprobacy—blaspheming, as you do, at once the wondrous work which the Spirit of God is performing among the heathen, and the characters of some of the most devoted and holy, both men and women, whom piety and philanthropy have ever inspired to go forth amid the pollution and wretchedness of the world, to reclaim men for God and for happiness. Repent you of this great sin, and quickly; lest some evil thing suddenly befall you, in your person, your family, or your fortune: and when you humbly confess, see that you bring forth fruits meet for repent-

ance. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal. vi. 7, 8.) Consult for yourself the statute-book, and see how appropriately these words have been quoted. There you will find, that that mocking of God, to which the apostle especially refers, and which he declares will not pass with impunity, consists in refusing, or neglecting, to contribute for the support of the ordinances of the Gospel. Again, therefore, I say, "Mock not, lest your bands be made strong."

(5.) I notice, in the Fifth place, that a *habit* of any gross outward sin is a decided evidence of an unregenerated state. Though a man has not the direct mastery of his thoughts and affections, so that it is only by a protracted course of training that evil is expelled from his heart; yet he has, at all times, the mastery of his speech and actions; and from the first hour of his conversion, he may, in these respects, be faultless. Nevertheless, the charity of our faith makes allowance for occasional failures, under the force of temptations and evil habits formerly acquired—not in the way of *excusing* them, by any means; nor even in the way of treating them as if they were not calculated to give occasion to *doubts;* but in the way of refraining from making them the grounds of an excommunicatory judgment,

when there are other favourable indications. In former days of quaint, but profitable, because easily remembered, distinctions, they were accustomed to say, that it is not an "act," but a "tract" of sin which convicts a man of being unregenerated. That he, who is generally sober, should, at convivial meetings of friends, have, twice or thrice in his life, been overtaken by drunkenness; or that the recovering drunkard should fall repeatedly, in the course of breaking down the evil habit, before it has been overcome;—that she, who was virgin in heart as well as state, should, in her inexperience of the world's villany, have fallen under the flatteries and wiles of her perjured seducer;—and, that, through dread of the bankrupt's name and ruin, the harassed merchant should have forged his neighbour's *acceptance*, trusting that he might be able to retrieve all before the day of reckoning;—that these, and similar individual *acts* of sin, should have been committed, does not convict those who have been guilty of them of unregeneracy; and only exposes them to the church's admonition and censure, without inferring exclusion from its communion.—*But*, a repetition of the visit to that den of infamy and horror, where the polluted keep their preparatory hell (Prov. ii. 18, v. 5);—a life and business of fraud and imposition, and watching for undue advantages, and buying and borrowing without any design to pay;—a life of slander, when you might suppose, that the man and woman were paid for it, so busily is the vocation of malignant detraction prosecuted, without a

word of commendation ever spoken of a human being, unless it be in favour of a stranger, for the more effectual depreciation of a neighbour, by the comparison ;—these, and similar *tracts* of sin, manifest clearly the lineage of the devil. And it is astonishing to what extent experience reveals our ill-disciplined churches to be replenished with the last two of these characters, the evidence of whose reprobacy is as marked and decided as that of the first—in many cases more glaringly ; Yes, far more :—Deal gently, I claim of you, with the silly youth whom the practised harlot has ensnared ; but let the curse of Christ be poured in full flow on the head of the praying cheat ; and, not less unrestrainedly, on the head of the prim maiden scandal-monger, who glories in the dishonour of her own sex ; but, most copiously of all, on the head of the malicious orthodox sectarian ;—yea, there is viler than he, that envious one, who is ever ready with his insinuation and abatement to mar the reputation of those whom he salutes as "brethren." Empty the vial on him.—When I speak of the Redeemer's *curse*, many of this sickly, sentimental age, will feel surprised. Let me inform them, that no one ever cursed so bitterly as did He. And no man can adequately understand his Love, who has not studied that Curse. One of the principal manifestations of Love, is Anger at him who injures the object of its favour.

There are two habitual sins which occasion a discri-

minating judge peculiar difficulty. The *first* is *periodic drunkenness.* Who does not know of cases in which these three months of penitence, of prayer, of gentleness, and faithfulness in every duty, alternating with those three mournful days of the delirious rage of the habit acquired in times of profligacy, defy us, howsoever *suspicious* we may feel, to pronounce the sentence of unquestionable unregeneracy? As on former occasions, I am aware of the danger of expressing such sympathetic sentiments. But it would indicate, that I did not understand my duty as a moralist, if, through fear of strengthening the delusion of a thousand worthless, who are already lost, I should withhold any word of encouragement, to which he is entitled, from a struggling penitent. You, who may be catching at that word, are *you* one of the *struggling* number? and do you feel that this friendly salutation will strengthen you for the next three days' conflict? Die, my poor brother,—rather die than yield. Act the martyr; yes, when the world and an unmerciful church might speak of you as a *victim* of sin, the Redeemer would welcome you into his kingdom as a *martyr* in the cause of holiness.

Much more perplexing is the *second* case referred to—that of grave, judicious, strictly just, church-going, sacrament-observing, bible-reading, praying *avarice,* which resists all solicitations and beseechments, to succour the needy, and aid in the work of disseminating the truth; but which will, nevertheless, applaud for its gospel strain, the sermon in which liberality was

inculcated from the example of Him, who, although He was rich, became poor, that through his poverty this same man, for one, as he himself hopes, might be made rich with heavenly salvation. He has *so much to do*, he says, in other directions, that he must be exempted from taking a share of the charitable duty. And in what, think you, does this *so much* consist? In buying another field; in building another house, (Isaiah v. 8): in making *even* another ten, or another hundred, or another thousand, of the deposit with the banker; and ever as this is accomplished, there is another contiguous field required for rounding his estate, or a vacant piece of ground which remains to be built up, or another ten, or hundred, or thousand of the deposit which must be made *even*, giving him *as much to do* as ever; so that for the present, at least, so far as he is concerned, the poor must want, and the missionaries be recalled. Remember, that all the while, he is a sober, just, correct, prayerful man—such a one, that, were all the world like him, there would be little need of charity.—What shall we say of this? What shall we do with it? But, howsoever perplexing, a declaration is loudly called for. Know this, then at least, miserable slave of the meanest of sins, that all men despise, and many hate you. Mistake not that show of respect which the fear of your money-power compels when you are present. After you have withdrawn, I, who remain behind, and hear what they say, assure you that they speak of you as of a dog. But there is more than this: notwithstanding your

correct and prayerful life, there is not a saint who, although charity may restrain him from pronouncing a decided judgment, does not in his heart *suspect* you of being an unregenerated self-deceiver. Still this is comparatively a small matter. You are base in your own estimation: I know you are; and troubled with doubts about your spiritual condition; so that you never enjoy one free breath of confidence in God, and persuasion of being accepted with Him.—How lamentable it is that the love of silver and gold—the love of a few ounces of dead metal, should hold you in such ignominious and ruinous servitude! Rise, man, and vindicate your liberty; and taste what luxury there is in doing good: the luxury of being blessed by him that was ready to perish; the luxury of seeing his happiness like a beautiful flower of your own planting; the luxury of the approbation of neighbours and christian brethren; the luxury of the complacence of a good conscience; the luxury of feeling, that you are like Christ; the luxury of the sense of God's favour; the luxury of the hope of being glorified in his kingdom. That which is now your master and most cruel foe, when vanquished and made your servant, will prove one of your best friends—contributing most efficiently to the securing for you of a heavenly crown. The poet has as truthfully as strikingly and beautifully said:

> Wealth in the gross is death; but life, diffused.—POPE.

But hear Christ: "Make to yourselves friends of the

mammon of unrighteousness, that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." (Luke xvi. 9.)—There are several excellent features in your character—there are your sobriety, your gravity, your sagacity, and your integrity—which, both in sympathetic concern for yourself, and self-interested concern for the church, make the acquisition of you, as a true-hearted disciple, covetable in no ordinary degree. It is, therefore, that when you are so sharply rebuked, you are as affectionately solicited and encouraged.

Such is the testimony which I take upon me to give, in the name of the church, against this hateful and soul-destroying sin. But is the church blameless, when it leaves all attempts at correction of the evil to testimonies and alarms fulminated from the pulpit and the press? Should there not be solemn deputations of Elders or Deacons to remonstrate with the criminal personally? What injury would be sustained, though he took it offensively? Would the church lose anything by his departure? The ground of complaint itself shews that it would lose little in respect of wealth; it would lose less, I am sure, in respect of spirituality; and, equally sure, that it would gain something in respect of the favour of God, through the flight to the enemy's camp of this Achan with his gold; or the excision from the commonwealth, of this Merozman, who will not go up himself, and is a hinderance of others going up, to the help of the Lord. (Joshua vii. 25; Judges v. 23). We are, perhaps, not quite pre-

pared for such faithfulness of discipline; but matters are in such a satisfactory state of progress, that the next generation will assuredly enforce it.

(6.) It has been in dubious terms that I have expressed myself when treating of the two sins which have been specifically noticed in the immediately preceding pages—that, when accompanied, as they are represented to be, with favourable appearances in other directions, they give occasion only for *suspicion* of the regenerated condition of those who are guilty of them. But I return to certainty of utterance, when I notice a spirit of Revenge as being indubitable evidence of unregeneracy. In proportion to the peremptoriness of this decision, let us discriminate with care wherein Revenge consists. Observe, then, that when a man, being provoked, shall, on the spur of the moment, strike the offender a blow;—or, shall retire home and write him an indignant letter;—or, when, having been publicly defamed, he shall, in self-defence, reveal the slanderer's history and character, that neighbours may know how to estimate his word;—or, when he delivers him up to the public prosecutor, with this plea honestly made, that the design is to protect others from being similarly injured:—or, when friendship having been betrayed, he resolutely refuses, notwithstanding all confessions, to receive back the treacherous one into his confidence;—in none of these cases, not even the first, is the spirit of Revenge imputable.—Here is your condemnation:

if, without any legitimate view either to self-defence or the protection of the public, you shall lie on your bed, and plot and devise with yourself against your offender, how you shall injure him in his person, his character, his business, or his family; or, if without yourself being the agent, you shall rejoice to hear of any misfortune having befallen him;—in any circumstances, but, especially, if the man has confessed the wrong, and sought your forgiveness, such a spirit clearly evinces you to be devil-born: and it would be a species of insult of holy and benignant Regeneration, were I to commence to *argue*, that you cannot possibly have participated of it. Whatever, then, may have been your professions, and prayers, and seeming well-doing in past life, be assured you have yet the pilgrimage to make, for the first time, to that Cross on Calvary, to learn there how to forgive and love. It is impossible you can have been there before.

(7.) I have nothing to add to the discussion of the question, which was formerly considered at great length, if want of Growth in grace, be evidence of an unregenerated state; and therefore refer to the illustrations made on that occasion. The conclusion at which we arrived was, that, though the want of progress is not proof of a destitution of the gracious principle, it gives ground for suspicion, both to a man's self and his friends.

(8.) Want of grief for sin; and (9.) want of joy in

God, are evidences of an unregenerated state, the illustration of which will be introduced with greater propriety, under the positive argument, when treating of what is Necessary as evidence of the change having been produced.

SECOND, *Things which some mistake as sufficient to prove that Regeneration has been effected.*

(1.) I notice, in the First place, that, just as we have seen, under the preceding topic, that a habit of any gross outward sin proves clearly, that he who is guilty of it has not undergone the saving change; so, neither do decency, integrity, and amiableness, in respect of the personal and social duties, afford sufficient evidence that it has been effected. In the cases, indeed, of a Caffre, a Hindoo, a Tahitian, or New Zealander, such propriety of conduct may be admitted to be decisive evidence; for, amid the abounding corruption and temptation, nothing but divine grace could produce such a state of morals. But, in *our* circumstances, though the absence of such virtues indicates clearly the want of gracious principle; their presence does not afford even presumptive evidence of its possession. The civilization, the laws, the maxims and manners of society, are adequate to their production, through the force of educational habit, through sympathy, through fear, through prudence, and shame; and, especially, in union with constitutional impulse and temper.—Although the subject has already largely engaged our

attention, yet, since it is one which gives ground to many for much self-delusion, bear with me, when again I warn you, that, while much that is honourable and amiable may dignify and adorn your characters, there may be underneath the dark, cold, and hard heart of nature, neither enlightened, warmed, nor softened by one admitted ray of the Sun of Righteousness; and in respect of obedience to that commandment which is first —even, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God—as devoid of every sentiment of holiness, as that of the most debased heathen, or most hardened profligate. And though it makes a great difference for us your neighbours, as a matter of worldly comfort; yet, as a matter of virtue in the sight of God, it can make little difference, that one heart should be unclean and cruel, and another chaste and merciful, if yet they harmonize in slighting both Himself and his Son. Equality, in this respect, makes all other distinctions insignificant. The one is as much disqualified for the kingdom of Heaven as the other—could not engage in its exercises—could not enjoy its pleasures—and would be an offence, were it permitted for a moment to present itself within the sacred precincts. Beware, I repeat, of decency; beware of its delusive power in making men and women securely self-satisfied. It is thus it slays as many as profligacy does. It was thus it slew the pharisees, when the publicans and harlots, self-convicted of their depravity, embraced the Deliverer, and gained the kingdom.

(2.) I notice, in the Second place, that, just as we saw, under the preceding topic, that negligence of the Bible proves the heart to be unregenerated; so neither do much reading and diligent study of it prove that the change has been effected.—The Bible may be read and studied, as it was by Paine, that he might turn it into ridicule; or as it was studied by Byron, that he might beautify his poetry with its images and phraseology; or as it was studied by Scott, that, by making his characters speak its language, he might portray them with greater art.—Not any more satisfactorily as an evidence of being regenerated—may a minister of the gospel, and a student of theology, and the teacher of a sabbath-class, read it and ponder it, that they may discharge the duties of their profession respectably—and the sectarian controversialist, that he may defend his own party, or in pride magnify himself, or in malice wound his adversary—and a child, in obedience to the order of a parent, so as to carry a sabbath evening's habit of the exercise into advanced life—and the head of a family at domestic prayers, that he may support his character, and observe a comely custom. How many profitless and perverse ways there are of reading and even studying the Bible! How many there are who read it in no other way! How few read it in the only way which indicates a renewed heart—believing it, loving it, searching in it for that which will be of profit to them for eternity;—using it as a guide-book, without which they feel they might lose the way, and never

reach the kingdom of their expectation!—The subject will present itself once more under a future topic; and, at present, I shall only press the question, Do you, who read the Bible diligently, feel, that although there were no other person to whom you might speak of its contents—whom you might instruct, with whom you might maintain controversy, whose favour you might secure—you would nevertheless continue your reading, on account of the interest you take in the book, as necessary to your comfort, when by night on your bed you meditate on its law?

(3.) I notice, in the Third place, that *zeal* in the advocacy of evangelical doctrines, and of Christ's headship over the church, and of purity of communion, and of missions, and sabbath-schools; and in the denouncing of national sin, and infidelity, and heresy, and popery, and sabbath profanation, and drunkenness, and sin in general—that all zeal of this sort, on whatever subject, is not sufficient evidence of a regenerated state. Lukewarmness gives grounds for the suspicion of want of grace; but the zeal does not afford proof of its existence. It is pitiful, that many should be *gulled*, as our good English well expresses it, into the admiration of not a few unworthy men, merely because they hear and see them so passionate and fierce in abusing and cursing those who, in many instances, are in every respect their superiors. But this is an evil of comparatively little moment: what excites the greater pity is, that the men

should frequently prevail in deceiving *themselves;* when, having finished the exhibition, they will make the reflection, that surely they could not have waxed so hot in the defence of any subject, and in the denunciation of its opponents, unless they themselves believed in it, and valued it for its own sake. By what shallow sophistries the heart will impose on itself! Are not pride, and desire of applause, and spite, and self-interest, and even logical ardour in pursuing an argument, adequate enough to the production of all the heat, without there being the slightest personal conviction of the truth or justice of the matter? Is *special pleading,* rising into raptures and flames of fire, and anon weeping as if the heart would break, practicable only for the bar, and unattainable by the pulpit, the platform, the press, the prayer-meeting room, and the dining table. Will not the infidel liberal, having his own particular ends to serve, become very wroth with us for proclaiming the popish Mass a wicked blasphemy, and, with airs of great solemnity, remind us of the words of Christ, about uncharitable judgments; when yet he himself despises not only the Mass, but the doctrine of the very existence of Christ, as being all a *mass* of superstition together? —How much easier it is to conceive of a beneficed prelatist, in defending the Church, as he calls it, from the assaults of its adversaries, magnifying the Thirty-nine Articles as the perfection of theology, and the Common Prayer as the perfection of devotion; when yet there is neither Article nor Prayer which either his

head believes or his heart relishes. And as easily as this, I, for one, can conceive of an envious dissenter, exposing with scorn and indignation the dogma of the catechism, on the subject of baptismal regeneration; when he himself has as little faith in the scriptural doctrine of the Regeneration of the Holy Ghost.—Zeal —zeal always warm, and sometimes wrathful, in contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, is commendable—is Christ-like. But there is not only a zeal without knowledge; there is a zeal without faith —mere selfish, sectarian, political, spiteful passion, which questions those truths itself, for denying or violating which it reprobates and denounces others. Your passion *may be* genuine, but that is to be proved by the consistency of the rest of your conduct; and cannot be received simply, and of itself, as an evidence of a regenerated state. Let the public anger then be tested by the state of the private charity to the widow and the orphan. Nay, that test is not sufficient: try it by the state of your meekness and forbearance among your daily associates, and fellow church members. And more necessary still, try it by the state of your domestic attentions and tenderness. Ah! *there's the rub* for a great multitude.

(4.) I notice, in the Fourth place, that convictions of sin, experienced either now or formerly, are no evidence of Regeneration having been effected. Want of such conviction, in some degree, as has been already stated

and will be afterwards explained at large, is evidence to the contrary; but its existence, even in a high degree, is not proof in favour.—It is lamentable to find to what extent ignorance of the genius of the gospel is indicated by the manner in which many express themselves on this subject. On the one hand, you will hear some speaking hopefully of their deceased wicked friends, merely because on their deathbeds they were anguished with remorse; and on the other, you will meet with many who attempt to soothe their consciences, amid their worldliness, by the remembrance of former days of mental darkness and distress.—Cannot some of the most reprobate characters give a similar account of themselves? Was not Judas deeply self-convicted? Do not the devils tremble? There is a species of conviction which, instead of being a sign for good, is a sign of the worse description for evil.

I shall take no account, at present, of the self-accusations which proceed from a disordered state of the nervous system, when the mind is as ready to accuse itself of that which it has not committed, or which is no sin at all, as of that in which its guilt truly lies: nor, of those dark insinuations of the Tempter, which are designed not only to produce despair, but frequently to divert the mind, through fancyings of sin, from the consideration of its greatest evils. Only, I state my opinion, that such superstitions and delusions are often overruled by the Providence of the Spirit to prepare for his Inspiration.—But it is the convictions of a natural

conscience to which I especially call your attention. How much more than in the former cases must I not be persuaded that these are frequently overruled by the Providence of the Spirit, yea, occasioned by it, for most beneficial ends? But, so far as they are the work of the natural moral sense, they are of no religious value. On the contrary, they are spoken of in the Scriptures, as "the sorrow of the world which worketh death." (2 Cor. vii. 10.)

The meaning of the apostle is unduly restricted when this "sorrow of the world" is represented as being merely a sorrow about the worldly consequences of sin. That very case—the case of Judas, to which those who make the limitation suppose the sacred writer to refer, disproves the propriety of the restriction. The traitor can have been but little troubled, I think, about the manner in which either his character or fortune, in this world, would be affected by the baseness of his conduct.—The sorrow of the world is evidently such as a *worldly mind* may feel, as contradistinguished from one that is *spiritualized:* a sorrow which may have for its chief element the terror of God: so as to produce either the suicide's despair; or a hardening of the heart against the character of God, as an unreasonable and implacable Avenger of sin. It is this hardening of the heart, with its consequences for eternity, which the apostle seems to characterize as "death;" rather than such a death as his despair *worked* for Judas.

There may have been convictions, then, of the most poignant character, occasioned by the natural working of the mind, without there being any Regeneration in the case. But, more than this, there may be the "godly sorrow" of which the apostle speaks, when the great change has not been consummated.—This godly sorrow is characterized by a self-abased acknowledgment of the intrinsic vileness of sin, as well as by fear of its ruinous consequences; so that it magnifies the righteousness of the Judge when he condemns. (Psalm li. 4.) But though such sorrow is of the operation of the Holy Ghost, and will certainly issue in Regeneration, it may be of long continuance, before that issue is attained. Is it not most preposterous to assume your knowledge of being in a state of danger, as an evidence of being in a state of salvation? Reflect, again, what is the great truth by the belief of which the saving change is instrumentally produced: it is, that "God having raised up his Son Jesus, has sent Him to bless you." (Acts iii. 26.) So that the question for testing Regeneration, instead of being, Are you alarmed on account of your sin? is properly of a nature directly the opposite, being this, Is your heart at peace with God?

This has conducted the subject to that point at which it will be resumed under the positive argument: and I shall in this place only advert further to a pertinent distinction of colloquial theology.—The distinction which some make betwixt Regeneration and Conversion, is meaningless, if not erroneous and

prejudicial. At best, it can denote only that difference betwixt the act of Regeneration and the work of Sanctification, which has been so largely illustrated. But the adage that Conviction is not Conversion, is most worthy of being remembered and pondered. Besides telling us then of the humbled person you are under a sense of sin—in order to persuade us that you are regenerated, you must proceed to tell us how you have actually and practically turned from your sin—turned unto God, and a faithful keeping of his commandments.

(5.) I have already made some observations on spurious zeal; connected with it, I notice in the Fifth place, that the circumstance of the feelings being excited, even unto tears, under the preaching of the gospel, is not sufficient evidence of a regenerated state. How many are self-deluded by such tears, pleading with themselves, that, notwithstanding of much being confessedly wrong, they must surely have at bottom well disposed hearts, since they wept so profusely.—There is nothing of which there is so great a variety, in this weeping world, as tears; and a very careful analysis is needed to determine if they are genuine.—Observe, therefore, *first*, that it may have been some adjunct, or subordinate part of the gospel, such as the meeting with deceased christian friends in the heavenly kingdom, by the representation of which the heart was affected, and not the essential truth of the gospel, consisting of

the proclamation, that God's mercy has provided a Saviour for sinners.—*Secondly*, that though it was the essential truth which was being preached, it may have been the *manner* in which it was illustrated, and not its *substance*, by which you were affected—the golden *setting*, and not the precious stone itself—the dramatic representation of the woes of the Man of Sorrows, exciting your imagination, like the tale of the distress of the heroine of the novel.—*Thirdly*, that it may be the *circumstances* which are associated with the truth, rather than the truth itself, which have excited your interest. The kindness of a master will cause a servant to be a zealous partizan of his employer's opinions, and to be delighted with their advocacy;—and a young man making his suit to a young woman of piety, will, for the time, feel deeply interested in those evangelical doctrines which she admires, through sympathy with her mind, when he has no love of the truth for its own sake; as will be evinced, when, having turned to another object of affection, of different principles, the same sympathy will induce him to deride what he formerly esteemed.—*Fourthly*, that they may be the maudlin tears of nerves made sensitive by *drink*. How many there are who never evince any tearful sentiment of either friendship, patriotism, or religion, except when they are drunk! They are curious things, these excitements of feelings, and no dependency can be safely placed on them. Nevertheless, as formerly stated, they are valuable when genuine: and in order to determine

if they are so, let them be tried by the following tests: First, if they are sometimes enjoyed in private meditation as well as in company with friends; and, if the closet prayers partake of the excitement, as well as those which are social and public: Second, if a calm sermon of good prose will sometimes produce them, as well as one which is imaginatively and oratorically constructed and pronounced: Thirdly, and specially, if the general tenor of the life be one of humility, and faithful obedience to the divine commandment. If they bear the application of such tests as these, let them be freely cherished and indulged in, without any fear of their tending to self-delusion.

(6.) Eminence in the discharge of the duties of one particular department of virtue—in sabbath-school teaching, for instance, or charitable attentions to the poor, is not sufficient evidence of a regenerated state. But the illustration of this, also, will be made more properly under the positive argument, when treating of universality of obedience as being necessary to make up the proof.

THIRD, *Things which some mistake as necessary to prove that Regeneration has been effected.*

(1.) I observe, in the First place, that, in order to make good his claim to being regarded one of the regenerated number, it is not necessary that a man assure us of his having, at some period of his life,

undergone a process of sharp and alarming Conviction of sin. We formerly saw, that the circumstance of having experienced such Conviction is not proof, that the work must have proceeded forward to Regeneration; but equally, I remark now, that it does not necessarily precede the saving change. Many have been deeply convicted without being regenerated; and many have been regenerated without being deeply convicted. Not to speak of friends, whose faith we may not question, who have assured us in conversation; nor of eminent saints, who have assured us in their memoirs, that they never experienced such distressing alarms as those by which others have been agitated—does it not appear highly probable, that the whole of the apostles, with the exception of Paul, embraced the Saviour, without having been previously subjected to the mental agony? Nevertheless, the argument of systematic theology, that the alarms of the Law are necessary to qualify the mind for appreciating the tidings of the Gospel, is calculated to stumble many, whose evidences are otherwise satisfactory; but who have no record in their history of a time of such distress as forced from them the exclamation, "What must we do to be saved?" With the view of quieting their anxiety, I shall answer the objection shortly; nor shall I take any advantage, at present, of cases of conversion in infancy, many of the circumstances of which may have been forgotten.

Observe, then, First of all, that I by no means deny

the necessity of a *degree* of conviction of sin preceding, or at least accompanying, an embracement of the salvation of Christ. Grief for sin, sadness and uneasiness of heart on its account, consciousness of debasement and unworthiness, and conviction to some extent of evil demerit and danger, as when the thunder is heard at a distance, are absolutely necessary. On this I shall insist afterwards; but what I contend for at present is, that Regeneration may have been effected without the antecedent Conviction having risen into a state of such agitating alarm, as that by which the time of the conversion of some is characterized.

Observe, Secondly, that there are two species of Conviction of sin—the one, *sensible conviction*, when the awakened penitent feels or perceives for himself the evil of his ways, and is deeply self-condemned—the other, the *conviction of faith*, when, according to the testimony of God, as given in his word, he knows and believes, that his conduct is offensive to the divine holiness, though he do not feel it or perceive it to be so evil as the divine law represents it to be: just as when the consumptive patient does not feel that he is dying; but believes it on the testimony of his physician.—Now into every case of genuine conviction both of these elements enter. But in some cases the Sensible element preponderates; in others that of Faith. When the Sensible preponderates, the alarm is more acute; just as it is more acute in the case of him who *feels* himself dying, than in that of him who, on the

physician's testimony, *believes* himself to be dying. It is not, however, on that account, the more valuable and operative. Sometimes it is; but the cases are not rare in which much of this *sensible* alarm is the product of a diseased state of the nervous system, of superstitious ignorance, and the insinuations of the Tempter. May we not question, indeed, if very high sensible alarm, proceeding from the individual's own perception of the evil of sin, *can* be thoroughly genuine at first? Is not such delicate and acute perception the property of a mind which has been disciplined in holiness subsequent to regeneration? But whatever be the case, we are not called upon to determine the comparative value of the two kinds of conviction. It is sufficient for our argument, that we maintain that the conviction of Faith, which may be comparatively calm, and not attended with any violent emotion, is sufficient for the work; when the believer says, "I see by this testimony of God, that I am in a dangerous condition;" and is thus induced to accept of the proffered salvation: just like the consumptive patient, who on the testimony of the physician, is induced to leave his native land for another clime, though he does not *feel*, but only *believes* the need of it.—Nevertheless, I not only do not maintain, but deny, that there is any case of genuine conviction into which the Sensible element does not enter, and which consists entirely of that of Faith. My doctrine is, that in a multitude of cases the Sensible is comparatively slight; so that

the alarm is less acute, when yet they are satisfactory cases of conversion.*

Observe, Fourthly, that the case is not such as if the terrors of the Law were proclaimed for a long series of sabbaths, with a *reserve* of the proclamation of the mercy of the Gospel. On the contrary, no sooner is the danger exposed than the defence is displayed: so that the denunciation of wo has not time, where there is a believing heart, to work up the mind into a state of high alarm. It is instantly met and counteracted by the glad tidings. And even though these glad tidings should not be instantly credited, yet the simple mention of a Saviour's name—the merest imagination of Him—the faintest idea of the possibility of being saved, prevents the emotion of fear rising so high as it would otherwise ascend. Yea, even *before* the law commences its work of terror, how few, in our favoured country, have not the mind pre-occupied with some notion of a Redeemer, ready to suppress the incipient alarm?—If this then be all the cause of your uneasiness, and questioning of your being in a saved condition—that you have never been excited to a state of great fear, dismiss the anxiety. It may as well be a good sign for your faith, as a bad sign for your unbelief.

At the commencement of the foregoing brief argument, I said that I entered on it for relieving of their inquietude some who are worthy, and who have the

* See some additional remarks on this subject, Discourses, First Series: On the Evil of Sin.

best of reasons for being persuaded of their regeneracy. But there is another party who have need of it. Those who have been the subjects of those poignant and alarming convictions are exceedingly ready to question the conversion of those who have had no experience of similar trials. They cannot comprehend, they say, how any one can appreciate the salvation of Christ, who has not been reduced to a state like theirs, nigh to despair: and they will say so, not only with an uncharitable suspicion of others, which needs to be rebuked; but not seldom with an air of spiritual pride, which needs to be humbled—when they take a kind of consequence to themselves for having been so deeply distressed.—Besides referring them, therefore, to the vindication which I have made of their brethren, I must inform them, that I do not generally find, that those who have undergone the experience of such distress excel their neighbours in the graces of the christian life: and also, to suggest, that, instead of assuming importance to themselves on account of their alarms having been protracted to such a length and having risen so high, it becomes them to be ashamed, when they reflect, that they continued so long in unbelief, and did not sooner give credit to the peace-speaking voice of the Gospel. Nor need they express any fear that such a course of remarks may cherish the delusion of some who are careless and light-hearted. I have already stated, and will afterwards at large illustrate, that a spirit humbled under a sense of sin, together

with confidence and joy in God, are indispensable as evidences of a regenerated state.

(2.) I notice, in the Second place, that, in order to make his claim good on being acknowledged a regenerated character, it is not necessary that a man be able to state precisely at what time he underwent the change. This topic, though distinct from the one immediately preceding, has several points in common with it, so that their illustrations will mutually aid each other.

Observe, then, that there are some persons who can refer to the year, the month, the day, yea, the hour, when the Spirit of God first breathed life into their souls. All this they can do in such a manner, that it would be unbelief for themselves to begin to question, if the work was of God; and at once a want of charity towards man, and despite done to divine grace, were neighbours to withhold their acknowledgment. And there is such a degree of satisfaction in it, both for the convert's self and his christian friends, that it is in some instances a state of matters greatly to be prized. But it is far from being necessary; yea, in many cases, far from being desirable; and to insist on it as some do, as a necessary evidence of Regeneration, is contradictory of facts, is unscriptural, is unphilosophical, and is deeply prejudicial.

First, it is contradictory of facts. The great majority of the saints, and many of the most eminent, have been,

or are, unable to assign the date of their conversion with any degree of particularity. Opponents will say, that this is taking the matter for granted; and that they question the regeneration of all such. Exactly: for the sake of a nostrum they will reduce the kingdom of Christ to a handful; some of which handful are not for a moment to be compared, in respect of excellence, with thousands of those who are thus summarily excommunicated.

Secondly, it is unscriptural. The Bible makes large acknowledgment of infant piety. Well, who may deny or doubt, that so soon as reason dawned, the Spirit of God blessed the instructions of parents and nurses and teachers, and so influenced the heart from the beginning, that it is impossible for thousands, when advanced to adult age, to remember a time when they were not seriously impressed, so as afterwards to be changed into persons of devout mind? They may remember seasons of quickening, when their graces received extraordinary communications of additional strength; but it is morally impossible, that they can remember a time when they *began* to reverence God and love his Son. I feel the utmost confidence when I affirm, that this is the case with the majority of the best part of the church of Christ in every land; except where missionaries have been making conquests for the first time among the heathen; and where there can be no fruit of early parental training.

Thirdly, it is unphilosophical. When it is by the

communication of truth to the mind that the Spirit changes the affections, that communication, and the consequent change may proceed, and in a multitude of instances does proceed, by such imperceptible degrees, that the most which the greater part, even of those converted in adult age, can say of themselves is, that, whereas they were once careless, worldly, and impious, they are now heavenly-minded and devout; but that so gradual has been the transition, and so various and mingled have been their motives, that, notwithstanding the most scrutinizing review, they cannot fix on a year, much less a day, when genuine faith took possession of their minds.—In reply to this representation some ask, Is not Regeneration a passing from darkness to light; and cannot a man tell precisely at what time he was brought forth from the gloomy cell to the shining of the sun? All such reasoning by figures in a moral question is unsubstantial; and may usually be defeated by turning its own weapons back on it. Accordingly, in the present case, though there are instances of conversion which may be compared to the rising of the sun in equatorial climes, where now it is dark as midnight, and anon up shoots the orb of day with almost meridian effulgence; yet, in the greater number of cases, the mental experience resembles night and day in our northern latitudes, where it is impossible to tell, first, when twilight began to put to flight the darkness, and then, when twilight passed into sunshine.

Fourthly, it is deeply prejudicial. To demand of a

man, in order, for instance, to his admission to the fellowship of the church, that he state the time of his conversion, and detail its circumstances, besides being unauthorized, is most dangerous, for the following reasons: *First*, it presents a strong temptation to some to be guilty of fabricating tales of singular impressions, etc. that they may stand the ordeal. *Second*, it tends to cherish an uncharitable spirit, when, under its influence, some, who have undergone a sudden change, will undervalue, and presume to express suspicions of others who are far superior saints to themselves, but who have no tale to unfold of any wondrous and instantaneous transition. *Third*, it is calculated to perplex and darken the minds of many of the worthiest, who, recollecting of no such extraordinary occasion which they can assign as the date of their change, begin to doubt their acceptance with the Lord. *Fourth*, it leads some to treat with despite both the pious care of parents, and the gracious dealings of the Spirit for many years of cherishing mercy. How provoking, as well as lamentable it is, that a youth prayerfully and faithfully trained, and evidently under spiritual guidance from his infancy, should, at the sixteenth or seventeenth year of his age, when excited by the vociferations and extravagant representations of some raw divine or foolish old one, mistake what is at best a quickening or revival for conversion; and go forth among his friends to tell how ignorant and deluded he had been heretofore, and how utterly a stranger to the grace of God—

thereby discrediting not only much parental, but much divine superintendence? How bitterly some have been chastised for such conduct as this, when, according to Boston's description, "their cup began to settle below the brim!" Universal doubt and despair are not seldom the consequence.

In conclusion, here, I protest against the question as unwarranted and ensnaring, put, though it be, in the mildest form in which it can be framed, when one person shall ask another, and especially as a trial question for the membership of the church, At what time do you suppose you were converted? It is ensnaring to say to him even this much, We shall be glad to hear if you have anything particular to state regarding the circumstances of your change. What are your *present* views, feelings, and resolutions? is all the length which the interrogator has any right to proceed.—In like manner, in private self-examination, it is frequently not only profitless, but injurious labour, when a man exercises himself, as many do, wondering and pondering at what time he may have been converted; and if, when he first observed the Lord's supper, for instance, he was in a gracious state. On reviewing former years, if he clearly discern that he was a recipient of divine influence, let him devoutly give thanks and take courage; but, if after a short time's meditation, he cannot determine what his condition was, let him cease from the inquiry, and take up the self-examination in this form, Whatever may have

been my state in former times, let me reflect what *it is* at present: it is this which specially concerns me. And should this also be found to be a matter of difficult determination, let him end the controversy by saying to himself, I will confess the Lord *now*, whether it be the first time I have done it genuinely or not; and, with rallied faith, having knelt down and confessed, let him rise and proceed on his journey with a free and unhesitating heart.

(3.) I notice, in the Third place, that to feel *assured* of being in a saved condition is not necessary for proving, that the individual has been regenerated. The Assurance to which I refer is of this nature: that when a man is interrogated on the subject by his friend, he can reply, that there are many things of which he is uncertain—that he is not sure, for instance, that the Second Advent of our Lord will be deferred another day; but that of this is he confident, that God has accepted of him through his Son; and that were he presently to die, his soul would be received into the assembly of the souls of the Redeemed. Now, that such a state of mind is most desirable; that it is attainable; that it is sometimes, if not frequently, attained to unpresumptuously and legitimately; that it is a commanded duty for all to seek after it; and that want of it indicates some deficiency in the faith—are all points which I not only concede but earnestly affirm. What I deny is, that the want of it indicates

a complete destitution of faith. The subject has been so frequently, so extensively, and so ably discussed by others, that I regret the less that my limits admit of only a few brief remarks.

Observe, *First*, then, that, as in the preceding kindred case, the dogma of assurance of personal salvation being necessary to the christian character, excommunicates many of the best spirits who have ever adorned, or which at present adorn, the profession of the Gospel. It is comparatively few that have attained to the undoubting triumph: and even in the case of those who have attained to it, usually it has been but a checkered sunshine. So that the alternative for the holders of the dogma is either to resign it, or to unchristianize tens of thousands as worthy, I am sure, as themselves, whoever they may be.

Observe, *Secondly*, that the dogma is unscriptural, inasmuch as acknowledgment is made in these inspired writings of the saintship of many whose views were frequently clouded with doubts. Witness the experience of David and Asaph: and the exhortations of the apostles, to labour after the assurance, as something to which, notwithstanding their saintship, many of the brethren to whom they wrote had not yet attained. (2 Peter i. 10; Heb. vi. 11.)

Observe, *Thirdly*, that the advocates of the dogma argue on principles metaphysically unsound, when they represent such assurance as being of the *essence* of faith. Both of the parties in this dispute agree, that we can be

saved only by Faith; and that Faith consists in believing, or in being assured of, what God has said in his Word. Well, what has He said? If He had said that He has freely pardoned all men, no person could have believed this, without being assured of his own pardon, as being one of the *all*. Or if He had said that He has pardoned a number, and that the individual in question is one of them, the belief of this would equally have produced the assurance infallibly. But who needs to be told, that the gospel contains nothing either of the one kind or the other?—With my whole heart I contend, that it contains a proclamation of the divine mercy having provided *the means of pardon* for all and every one: but equally, I contend, that its proclamation limits the *bestowment of the pardon*, in the case of all to whom the gospel is made known, to those who *make use* of the provided means; that is, to those who believe. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," contains at once the proclamation of the pardon, of its means, and of the *qualifying condition* of its enjoyment. Before, then, a man can know certainly that he is pardoned, he must know certainly that he has complied with the prescribed condition, viz., that he believes.

The question, therefore, resolves itself thus, Is every man that believes *sure* that he believes—sure that he believes the right thing, and that he believes the right thing rightly? Making, then, another supposition; if God had said to any man, I perceive thou hast faith, he could not have believed *that* without inferring

assuredly that he was saved. But again, who needs to be told, that no man can ascertain that he believes from this source? What, then, is the source? How may I know if I believe the gospel, in order to know if I am saved? Observe how dubious is the testimony! *First*, I am dependent on my own fallible judgment for knowing, if it be truly the gospel with which my mind is engaged, and not some perversion of it. *Secondly*, I am dependent on my own fallible consciousness for discriminating, if this which I feel within me be *believing*. And *thirdly*, when I am called on to test the genuineness of my supposed belief, by the manner in which I actively discharge my duty, it is again my own fallible judgment on which I must depend for determining *how much sin* is compatible with the existence of faith.—When these are the only means by which a man can know if he believes, is it any wonder, even though his faith be strong, that, in the hour of examination, he should feel bewildered, and retire from it, saying, I have no certainty that I believe, and consequently, none that I am saved? And is not this all the more likely to be the case in proportion as he is intelligent, humble, and tenderly conscientious? Accordingly, the older divines were accustomed to say, that the *direct act* of faith may be clear, when the *reflex act* is clouded; meaning by the *direct act*, that which has the testimony of the Word for its object, and by the *reflex*, that which has itself for its object. The application of the term "faith" to this latter act of the mind, has been cen-

sured, and perhaps with propriety.* Nevertheless, the distinction which it is designed to express is obvious. Many believe in Christ, and are therefore certainly saved; who do not believe that they believe in Him, and are therefore uncertain of their salvation. According to another distinction, which is expressly scriptural, they are possessed of the assurance of faith, but want the assurance of hope. (Heb. x. 22: vi. 11.)

Observe, *Fourthly*, that even a high degree of joy in God is not incompatible with the want of such undoubting assurance. If it were so, I would be tempted to unite with those whose error I have endeavoured to expose. That cannot be a doctrine of the gospel which admits any man to be a true disciple who is not possessed, in some degree, of the "spirit of adoption." The illustration of this, however, belongs more properly to the positive argument, to which I defer it.

Before closing the discussion of this point, I must enter my protest against any such perversion of the previous observations, as will render any one careless about "making his calling and election *sure*." Not to speak of the unsatisfactoriness, and comparatively languid zeal which must characterize a doubting state—think of the manner in which it affects the honour of God. How would your earthly parent feel, were he told, that, when they asked you if he was a kind father and loved you, you had replied, that you *hoped* he did, but that you were not *sure!* Make yourself sure of

* See Dr. Dick's Theology; Lecture LXVIII.

your Heavenly Father's affection, by studying his character, and studying the gift of his Son, till your heart shine with his image as the God of Love;—make yourself sure of it, by such prayerful dedications of yourself to Him, that the *reflex act* of your faith will find it impossible to question the genuineness of the *direct;*—make yourself certain of it, by well-doing, so that no remissness of obedience will give occasion for questioning the genuineness of the internal consciousness. Mark this last prescription especially. It was after the apostle had recognised the liberality of some members of the church, in "ministering to the saints," that he addressed their less faithful brethren in these words: "and we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence *in order* to the full assurance of hope," (Heb. vi. 11). The words are most memorable. They intimate that the sunshine of Assurance can be enjoyed only in the midst of well-discharged duty. To the same effect the apostle John says, "We *know* that we have passed from death unto life, *because* we love the brethren;" and again, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And *hereby* we *know* that we are of the *truth*, and shall *assure* our hearts before Him. Beloved if our *conscience* condemn us not," for negligence of duty, "then have we *confidence* toward God." (1 John iii. 14; iii. 18-21.) How admirable are these ethics of the scripture, blowing away as they do, all fancies of being accepted of God, when there is no active virtue; but

equally, passing by as vanity all well-doing, which is not *principled* by a respect to Himself and his Son; "for this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in *him*; and hereby—*by our obedience*—we know that he abideth in us, by the spirit which he hath given us." (1 John iii. 23, 24).

(4.) I notice in the Fourth place, that Perfection of character is not necessary as an evidence of Regeneration. How ludicrous this stricture at first appears! and yet, on reflection, it will be found to be greatly needed. *First*, how many censorious and harsh judges —some of them deacons and elders, and pastors too, as well as vulgar gossips—need it, not only for their rebuke, but for their consolation, when they shall awake to the sense of this their own great transgression of the law of charity, when they unchristianize their neighbours for every slight offence. But *secondly*, and specially, how many *foolish* ones of tender conscience need it;—foolish, not because of this tenderness of conscience, which rather indicates heavenly wisdom; but because of their making every deficiency or error which they can detect in heart or life a ground for pronouncing on themselves the sentence of unregeneracy. Whence this pride, I ask, that you thought *your* heart was so singularly good, that it could be easily set

right, and all at once made a paradise of sweet flowers, without even the root of a weed which would spring up to mar its beauty and fragrance? According to your principles, what is the sense of that distinction which all divines are so careful to illustrate, betwixt regeneration, and the subsequent gradual sanctification? Yea, what means the apostle's representation of the co-existence in the same heart of an Old Man and a New? More than this, what means that *correction* of his saints which the Scriptures extol as the most signal display of God's paternal loving-kindness? Where is there place for correction if Regeneration has made them sinless?—But there is worse than this: will you tell us, who and where are the saints? Do you ever meet with any? Either you do not—which would convict you of making wicked havock of the church—or, you measure them by a standard different from that which you apply to yourself; which would convict you, I know not, of what self-conceit, or of what imputations of partiality to the divine government.—Nor have I yet done with the exposure of your folly. In his word, God salutes as saints some who were guilty of sins far greater, I am sure, than yours. Well, whether is it his holiness you impeach, for having accepted them; or his impartiality for not having accepted you—doubting, as you do, that he has received you? Friend, bethink yourself. There is something worse than *folly* in your conduct. Again, I express my admiration of your tenderness of conscience; but as for that fancy, that

you must be perfect and stainless before you believe that you are regenerated and saved, I denounce it as being irrational, unscriptural, savouring of pride, defamatory of the church, dishonouring of God's mercy without magnifying his holiness; but especially, as discrediting the merits of the work of the Redeemer, which is the only perfect righteousness on which his people must depend, and draw for pardon *daily*.—Unless it be for a few, about whose existence some fond theologians speculate, but any of whom neither themselves nor any body else ever saw, perfection is reserved for the world to come. In the mean time, the church is the place for you, consisting as it does of a company of sinners under training and discipline for the correction of evils.

(5.) I notice in the Fifth and last place, here, that, notwithstanding the remark with which the preceding sentence closes, Growth in Grace is not absolutely necessary as an evidence of a regenerated state. The want of it gives grounds only for suspicion.—The subject has been amply discussed heretofore. (See p. 199.)

FOURTH, *Things which are necessary and sufficient for making the demonstration satisfactory, that Regeneration has been effected.*

I unite these two questions respecting what is satisfactory, and what is sufficient, because the same answer suits both of them; with this difference, how-

ever, which it is important to keep in view, that though any person should find that his principles and conduct stand the test of *one* of the articles represented as being *necessary*, he is not yet warranted to conclude, that the evidence is *sufficient*. To establish sufficiency there must be satisfactoriness on the whole of the points enumerated; whereas failure in one point *necessary*, proves that the claim to be accounted regenerated, is not legitimate.

Before proceeding with special statements, I observe further, that what is necessary to prove that the change has been effected must obviously consist, to a considerable extent, of the counterpart of that which has already been shewn to be an evidence that it has *not* been effected. And that illustration was designedly conducted in such a manner, that when we had arrived at the present topic, it should be sufficient, so far as these points are concerned, to refer backwards to the former treatment of them.

(1.) I observe, in the First place, that it is necessary to the proof of the heart being regenerated, that there be a perceptible difference—perceptible to yourself at least, if not to others—betwixt your principles, feelings, and conduct, and those of worldly men, who although decent and amiable, and in the common acceptation of the term, virtuous; are yet avowedly *un*religious. (See pages 232 and 259.)

(2.) I observe in the Second place, that the study and love of scriptural, evangelical truth, form a necessary item of the proof. (See pages 235 and 258.)

(3.) I observe, in the Third place, that a Spirit of Prayer is essential to the proof. (See page 241.)

(4.) I observe, in the Fourth place, that Grief for Sin is necessary as an evidence of a regenerated character. I have already argued at considerable length, in opposition both to conclusions too strictly drawn by systematic theology, and opinions founded on the experience of some converts, that violent convictions of sin producing the agonizing cry, What must I do to be saved? are not necessary for the proof that Regeneration has been effected. At the same time, however, I stated as emphatically, that a measure of Grief is requisite; and referred to the present department of the subject for a more ample illustration.

Grief for sin arises either from the conviction of its evil consequences—as exposing him who is guilty of it to present affliction and future punishment; or, from the conviction of its intrinsic evil—as malignant rebellion against a righteous Sovereign; as base ingratitude towards a bountiful Benefactor; as wicked injustice towards neighbours; as ungenerous treatment of friends; as a mean sacrificing of the conscience to the frown or smile of the world; as a debased sacrificing of the spirit to the flesh; as a maniac sacrificing

of eternity to time—of the felicity of heaven to the horrors of hell.—Now, that Grief, in both of these forms combined—both as a Grief of Fear, and a Grief of Self-abasement, must have occupied the mind *before* Regeneration, whether there be a remembrance of it or not, appears evident for these two reasons. *First*, a principal part of the testimony of that Word, by the belief of which the change is instrumentally effected, consists of a declaration made concerning every one who reads or hears it, that the government of God regards his natural character with abhorrence and indignation. Can any one believe this without being disquieted with fear; and, unless he defy God, as devils do, without being abased by the thought, that the Great Creator regards him with such moral aversion? It is utterly impossible.—*Secondly*, the great truth, by the belief of which the change is consummated, is, that the paternal mercy of God has provided for all—*for yourself*, the means of Salvation in his Son Jesus Christ. Can any one believe this without a previous or accompanying conviction, that he is naturally in a state of danger? Again, I affirm it to be impossible.

All this is most obvious: and there are only two questions of difficulty. The *one* is about the *degree* of inquietude or alarm. This will evidently be proportioned to the clearness with which the testimony respecting the danger is apprehended. According to a figure already employed, it may be as when the muttering of the thunder is heard at a distance; or,

as when it peals overhead. In the first case it may occasion only *uneasiness;* but that uneasiness may be sufficient to make the troubled spirit betake itself to that refuge from the storm, with its Cross-pointed thunder-rod, which it once so much despised; but, having entered which, it is as much delighted with the graciousness of the presiding Master, and all the work and the entertainment, as those who fled thither under greater perturbation.

The *other* question is both more important and difficult. It refers to the necessity of the second species of Grief; that Self-abasement which arises from the individual's own perception of the vileness of his character. Without this he will treat all the merciful proclamation of the Gospel as something which cannot have proceeded from a God of Love. He must be convinced of the integrity of the Judge in condemning him, before he can confide in his promises. And no general speculations on the divine character will suffice for producing this conviction. It will *help* the penitent's contrition when he reads in the Word, that God condemns him; but, unless he condemn himself, the condemnation of God will only harden his heart.

It will appear obvious, however, on reflection, that, as a general rule, the Grief of *self-abasement* will not be so deep *before* Regeneration, as it comes to be *after* it, when the moral sense is cultivated and refined under the process of Sanctification. At conversion, the Grief

of *fear* generally preponderates: in proportion to the abatement of which, and the advance made towards the "assurance of hope," does the Grief of *self-abasement* deepen: not only in consequence of the more enlightened and sensitive conscience looking back with horror on that which once affected it but slightly; but, of its feeling the comparatively venial remains of sin more painfully than it felt, when in its ruder state, sins which were greatly more heinous. Hence the phenomenon, frequently observed, of men becoming more humble under a sense of sin, in proportion, both to their being less guilty of it, and their acquiring a more assured confidence of being accepted of God—To prevent all abuse, however, of this latter remark, I observe, that, though for many years a man should, apparently on good grounds, have accounted himself one of the regenerated number, yet should he make some signal fall into flagrant sin, it is becoming and right that there should be a temporary recurrence of the Grief of Fear, through suspicion of the genuineness of his past professions, until, after a rigid review of his principles, and a solemn act of renewed self-dedication, his mind be legitimately restored to the feeling of safety, but not, observe, to *self-satisfaction.* Self-loathing, on the contrary, and bitter self-condemnation, and shame before both God and men, should continue for a long time, till mitigated by a course of faithfulness—*mitigated,* I say, for the remembrance of that transgression should keep him an humble man so long as he lives. It is one of

the best of Rabbinical reckonings, that although David wrote many sweet Psalms after his dreadful fall, he wrote none of the former triumphant character.

Having thus shewn, that he who has no experience of being grieved for sin cannot be regenerated, when we consider the grief as necessary, whether as a precedent or consequent of the saving change; all that remains to be done, is, that I submit a few tests by which any experienced restlessness and inquietude, should be tried, for determining if they are genuine.

Observe, *First*, then, that the sorrow when genuine has a respect to God, whose law has been violated.—It is not wrong, that you should toss about sleepless on your bed, and weep, and sigh, and groan, and wring your hands, anguished by thoughts of the manner in which your sin has injured your character, your health, your fortune, and your family: neither is it wrong that you should be tortured with remorse on reflecting that you have treated injuriously, or insultingly and treacherously, a tender parent or generous friend; nor, a third time, is it wrong that you should blush in your own presence, and avoid encountering the scowl of your own eye in the reflection of the mirror, when you think how meanly and dishonourably you have acted, though no one else knows of it. Instead of being wrong, all this is most becoming; and it would be a happier world were there more of such pain in it.—Now, mark, when I insist on something besides, I do not inquire, as some

others would do, if, *more*, than on all the foresaid accounts, you are troubled in spirit on account of having offended God. When David said, "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned," losing sight of the injury, howsoever great, which he had done to man, in the sense of the enormity of his sin as committed against God, the standard is too elevated for the measurement of a common piety. I, therefore, simply ask, if the thought of having offended God be in *any degree* an element of your distress. Even this much is a matter of great importance. And when you might find it difficult to decide if you are possessed of it; fearing, although thoughts of God are mingled with your meditations, that they may be present merely as systematic notions which education suggests, there are the following questions which will assist you in the judgment.—*First*, Do you ever feel grieved for having done that of which the world approves, or which it does not condemn, so that there is only the condemnation of God which can cause your sorrow? Or, are there cases in which when the world does not censure, or when it applauds, the condemning voice of God in his Word is felt to be any restraint?—*Secondly*, Do you ever feel grieved for having done that of which the world does not know; and especially, for meditations of the heart, of which He alone is the witness and discerner?—*Thirdly*, not to speak of the *general* confessions made of sinfulness in the *habitual* prayer; nor of the cry to God that He would extricate you from some great difficulty into which your sin had

brought you—both of which are of small account in this reckoning—is it common for you to confess in private prayer, *with particularity*, those deeds, words, and thoughts, by which you have violated his law? If your state will bear the trial of these three interrogatories, the promise is fair: nevertheless, the inquiry is far from being satisfactorily concluded.

Observe, *Secondly*, that there may be grief for sin towards God, when it is not of a godly, but worldly sort. It may consist merely of fear of His punishment —a feeling of which the most hardened reprobacy is susceptible. Do not mistake me. It is right, that, in the first instance, the sinner should tremble in fear of the divine judgment; and just as some err, as we have already seen, in magnifying the importance of violent fear, so others err in undervaluing it. It is of faith to tremble when God threatens. But a merely servile fear, which makes no acknowledgment of the divine Justice, is worse in its influence than utter insensibility. It is, therefore, necessary to examine if, when convinced that you are condemned of God, you are equally convinced that He condemns you righteously—if you do not complain of his law as being unreasonably severe—if you do not wish that it were altered;—in a word, if you are deeply displeased with, and condemn yourself; and *that*, not only for your imprudence in having exposed yourself to his displeasure, but for your vileness; so that although you were assured of His pardon, yet your grief would not cease, in consequence of your con-

tinuing for a long time, at least, to chide and fret yourself with a remembrance of your unworthiness. "Though God forgive me," many a true-hearted penitent has said, "I cannot forgive myself."—And by the way, I remark, that some mistake the abiding with them of this self-condemnation, as an evidence of their doubting God's forgiveness. How great is the mistake! A conscience, though purged from the fear of the punishment of works deserving death (Heb. ix. 14), is not necessarily purged from the pain of their memory. Is it desirable —would it be a favourable sign, that it should be so?

Observe, *Thirdly*, that no grief for sin can be genuine which does not produce an active turning from it: first a resolution, after the weeping: and then the forming of a plan by which the resolution may be executed. Next to the uselessness of weeping without a resolution, is the uselessness of a resolution without a plan, or the adopting of measures which tend to prevent the deprecated evil, or induce the desired good. In what is to many of us a very offensive chapter of their confession, the Westminster divines use a very expressive phrase, the use of which it would be profitable to revive. They represent it as being the duty of the civil magistrate to "take order" for the purity and peace, etc., of the church. But, although we indignantly protest against all such foreign interference and coercion, the idea of *yourself* "taking order" with yourself, at times even the length of physical force, is most salutary and precious. I know a man, now a pattern of

sanctity, who, when young, having been withdrawn to the city from the holy scenes of his father's hearth, was soon entangled in the meshes of a profligate companionship. Hitherto he had resolved in vain. Always as the neighbouring bell rung the hour of assignation, his purposes dissolved under the enchantment of its music. One memorable occasion having returned from the office as usual, he quickly dispatched his evening meal, signified to his landlady that he felt indisposed and was not to be disturbed, and then proceeded to "take order" with himself by turning the key in the lock of his room door, and pitching it down into the street. It was the New man "taking order" with the Old. The bell commenced to ring, but the spell was broken. He heard it unmoved. He prayed an old prayer of deep contrition, but of peace with God. He slept soundly: nor did the awkwardness of the locked door annoy him the least in the morning. His spirit was as a bird escaped from the hand of the fowler. Having faithfully "taken order" with himself, the Lord had "taken order" for him in the other direction. Neither by word nor letter did that companion ask for an explanation. It was alienation for ever.—The story has occupied a disproportionate space amid these brief strictures; but it is profitable as illustrative of an important principle.

On this point, I only remark further, that reparation, restitution, or compensation, so far as is practicable, is necessary as an evidence that the grief is genuine. "These are duties from which no lapse of time, and

hardly any alteration of circumstances, can ever exempt us. It is never too late to do justice; if we die without doing it the gates of God's mercy are shut against us, and we can have no benefit from the cross of Christ. If seas and mountains separate us from the being we have injured, we should pass over mountains and seas to find him; to beg his prayers to God, and to restore to him wine, and oil, and vineyards, and oliveyards, tenfold for all we have taken. If the grave hides him from us, we should visit his children's children with blessings, and be thankful that one vestige of his race existed upon the earth. No man can know rest or peace while there remains in his heart the remembrance of a *wrong* for which he has made no *reparation.* If you have taken ought of any man, give it back. If you have done secret wrong to his name, come out to the light of day, and restore innocence to the dignity it has lost. Shame is bad, and infamy is bad, and blushes are bad; but the wrath of God is worse than all these;—it is more bitter than the curses of a nation, and fiercer than an army with banners." These thoughts are as solid as they are eloquently expressed. But there is one department of duty to the obligations of which the orator was unhappily worse than insensible—for he mocked at the missionary; so that, with whatever comparative rudeness of utterance, I must supply the deficiency of his ethics. There is such a crime as robbery of God (Mal. iii. 8)—an appropriating to selfish uses of that part of wealth which He designed

should be consecrated to the promotion of his own cause. And when your conscience has been awakened to a sense of the sacrilege, the grief cannot be genuine which satisfies itself with acting henceforward like others who are faithful. I call for restitution. He is not an honest man who only resolves and promises to pay for the future, but refuses the payment of his arrears. Others have been contributing all along; and by so much as you have saved yourself, when compared with them, are you a debtor to the common interest.

Observe, *Fourthly*, that, in proof of your grief for sin being of that genuine kind which justifies God when he condemns, so that no evil views of his character prevent your giving credit to his word of mercy, it is necessary, that by a heart delivered from fear, you evince that you have believed in the salvation of his Son. This will be explained at large under the subsequent topic.

(5.) I notice in the Fifth place, that Joy in God is necessary as an evidence of the heart being regenerated. Of all tests this is the one which carries the conviction of unregeneracy most widely. For how many, even of the professors of the christian faith, does it not appear questionable, when they judge from their own experience, if there be any such joy on the earth? Were they to express their minds openly, they would say, they can easily comprehend what it is to live in *terror* of the Eternal One; but, that to have Him for an object of delightful contemplation seems to them to be some-

thing most *unnatural;* and that if there be persons in this world who experience such delight, they cannot but regard them as having singularly constituted minds. Just so: this is precisely what we have laboured to prove;—that it *is* unnatural for the natural heart; and that the regenerated mind *is* peculiarly constituted in respect of its tastes.

But the test goes much farther for conviction than when we apply it merely to that class of formalists to whom reference has just been made. Observe, that it consists of Joy in GOD. Now, there is a multitude who, in place of this, offer us as evidence of their being regenerated, a certain pleasedness with CHRIST. There are few subjects which require to be more carefully watched than this does. It is not *all* slander when the Socinian makes the charge against our evangelical system, that it robs the eternal Father of his glory. It is an undeniable truth that that system is in many instances so perverted, both in its preaching and entertainment, as to produce the alleged result. When with as much zeal as any, and more than the most, I denounce the Socinian, as having *no Saviour* in his creed, I equally denounce many of the self-esteemed Orthodox, as having *no Father* in theirs; but only something they call a Judge or a Governor, looming darkly, I had almost said, grimly, far behind in the distance. I know well enough that they speak at times of a Father in a systematic way: but the doctrine of a living, warm, divine Paternity is a stranger at once to the teaching

and experience of thousands, who endeavour to compensate for the want by speaking zealously for Christ, and, I question not, feeling towards Him a sort of affection.

Let it be distinctly noted, then, that that is not the faith of the Gospel, the love and confidence of which terminate with Christ. It is idle and impertinent to the subject, to reply, that Christ is God: most devoutly I believe it; but Christ is not the Father. And as Mediator (the principal, though not the only character in which we are called to contemplate Him) his work is to introduce and reconcile us to the Father. So that unless we "have received the spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father" (Rom. viii. 15), it is not *that* Mediator's work, under which we have been placed, but the work of some counterfeit of Him. Yea, christian faith properly commences with persuasions of the Father's love in his essential paternal character; and, from the beginning to the end of its course, contemplates Christ as being His Gift; so that the more it sees of Christ's preciousness, the more does it discover of the love of the Father who gave Him. I, therefore, press the question, Does *your* heart delight itself in God?

After the explanations which have been already made, when disproving the dogma of the necessity of being personally assured of salvation, all that remains to be done is to shew, that the Joy for which we call is not incompatible with the want of that Assurance. The task is an easy one.

Observe, then, once more, that the proclamation of the Gospel is, that the divine mercy has provided the means of salvation for *every one*, consequently *for yourself*. Now, is it possible to believe this, even with the faintest or most obscure faith, without having all *horror* of Him *completely* dispelled—all *fear* of him *nearly* dispelled—and a *degree* of love of Him and confidence in Him generated in the heart? It is utterly impossible, even though you should doubt strongly if you have *used the means, i. e.*, if you have believed, so as to doubt if you are saved. In that case you will only blame yourself, while you admire and magnify the mercy of God. This implies, indeed, what some who study the operations neither of their own minds nor the minds of others, are disposed to treat with ridicule, viz., that a man may believe, without being aware or certain that he believes. But the possibility of it, and the frequency of its occurrence, have been already demonstrated clearly.

The manner in which this belief, not conscious of its own existence (*i. e.*, the *direct* act of faith, independently of the *reflex*), will make the mind joyful in God, may be illustrated as follows:—Suppose, that, when an humble peasant was enjoying the gladsome light of the sun, some sophist should approach him, and, withdrawing him into his cottage, commence to dispute with him, till he began to doubt if it was indeed sunlight he had been enjoying, and suspect that he had been under some hallucination; yet, so soon as the insinuator of the scepticism retired, and he regained the open heavens,

the sunlight would cheer him as ever. The supposition is grotesque enough, but it is profitable for illustration. A man may believingly exult in the enjoyment of the light of the Gospel, but, under self-examination, or the interrogation of friends, become darkly suspicious, that it is not the true faith of which his mind is possessed: and yet, recover his joy so soon as, ceasing from the *reflex* contemplation of his own mind, he turns his eyes again *directly* to the Sun of Righteousness.

To amplify the illustration of what is so clear, would be superfluous: and I shall conclude the topic with a practical direction.—I would beware of disparaging indiscriminately the exercise of the *reflex* act—this looking *inward*, to find in your own faith the assurance of being saved. A measure of it is both profitable and dutiful. But many carry it a most injurious length—ever digging in their own hearts to see if they can find faith in them. There is no wonder, that the search should be so unsuccessful as it usually is. It defeats itself. It weakens that faith of which it is in quest, by abstracting the mind from the true object of faith. The grand secret of joy lies in looking *outward*—off, and away, and up from self to Another. The happiest and most assured are those who keep looking at the Sun as it shines; so as to be passively animated by its genial influences, without troubling themselves much with looking at their own hearts, to see if they are looking properly. "Look unto Me," is the word; and, again, "Behold the Lamb of God."

(6.) I notice in the Sixth place, that love and preference of the saints, as saints; and, (7) in the Seventh place, that a patriotic concern in the welfare of the church are necessary as evidences of a regenerated state. I refer to the negative argument for illustration, at pages 242 and 245 respectively.

(8.) I notice, in the Eighth place, that Universality of Obedience is necessary as an evidence of a regenerated character. When this concludes the subject logically, it concludes it also ethically with great appropriateness. The christian religion is the best, mainly because it makes the best men. Correct opinions are good, and joyful feelings are good, but active virtue is better; and *they* are good only as they issue in *it*.—That universality of obedience, which I have prescribed as a test, does not, of course, consist in a perfect discharge of duty; but, in having a respect to the whole of the divine commandments. Worldly virtue makes a selection of duties agreeable to its humour; and offers its performance of these as an apology for the neglect of all the rest: but the ruling principle of the regenerated mind, being submission to the control and regulation of the divine will, every commandment of the law has authority for it; so as to produce that "symmetry" of which Edwards discourses; and of which Boston, before him, had said, "there is a peculiar beauty in the true christian growth, distinguishing it from all false growth; it is universal

regular, proportionable." (State iii. P. 2.) This is by no means inconsistent with there being particular graces by which the saints are individually distinguished; when one for instance, is characterized by his attending to the poor, another by his attending to the heathen, and a third by his attentions to children. And it is profitable that there should be such variety in the distribution of spiritual tastes and qualifications. But all feel interested, and take a share, in every department of the work; and each, without unduly magnifying that which is peculiarly his favourite, admirés, and encourages, and gives thanks for his brother, who excels in another direction.

When a life of such active obedience is necessary, how indignantly must we not reject the claims of that numerous class who take credit to themselves because they *do no harm!* It is the virtue of the sheep on the mountains. Yea, the very pleading of it indicates a vicious nature. The man who boasts that he does not steal, and that he is faithful in paying his debts, must have a thief's heart in him, the solicitations of which it costs him an effort to deny. What would you think of the servant who, when his Lord returned, would begin to commend himself by saying, that he had neither injured his children nor spoiled his goods; but had sitten all the time quite peaceably by the fireside, and eaten his meals contentedly? "Thou *wicked* and slothful servant," is the fore-recorded doom. No indeed; christian virtue does not consist of mere *negations* of

vice. Its great Exemplar was not only "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," but "went about doing good," being "anointed with the Holy Ghost," which is the Spirit of our Regeneration. Accordingly, "He gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from *(the practice of)* all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people," (not *jealous*, as Dr. Chalmers was accustomed to remark, but, like Himself,) *zealous* of good works" (Titus ii. 14). "Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever!" AMEN.

APPENDIX.

ARTICLE A.

ON BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

(Withheld, as stated in the Preface.)

ARTICLE B, p. 54.

PRIVATION-THEORY OF ORIGINAL SIN.

THE importance of the case—important to myself as a defence of theological character—will apologize for what would otherwise be chargeable with egotism in parts of the following statement.—Even at present I am far from being creditably conversant with *dogmatic* theology; but, twenty years ago, I was not only discreditably but perversely ignorant of it; disposed as I was in a false feeling of independency to glory in that which was my shame. So early as that period I had elaborated for myself the theory of *Privation*, nearly in the very words in which it appears in the preceding discussion, without knowing that any human mind had attempted the solution of Man's Depravity on similar principles. My conceit, as a supposed discoverer, was suppressed by the servile fear, to which I cannot boast of being

insensible, that I might be reckoned heretical on a cardinal point of Christian faith: and all my satisfaction—which, however, was not small—consisted in my being persuaded, that I had removed imputations, derogatory to the character of God, with which it was assailed by certain forms of teaching. —Those who have undergone a similar experience will understand with what kind of emotions I sometime afterwards read such passages as the following in the Treatise of President Edwards. Dr. Taylor having pressed the usual charge against the doctrine of Original Sin, not without good grounds, as it is taught and entertained by many, that it represents God as being the Author of Sin, Edwards replies:—

"The objection supposes something to belong to the doctrine objected against, which does not belong to it, nor follow from it. As, particularly, he supposes the doctrine of Original Sin to imply that nature must be corrupted by some *positive influence;* something, by some means or other *infused* into the human nature; some quality or other not from the *choice* of our minds, but, like a *taint, tincture,* or *infection* altering the natural constitution, faculties, and dispositions of our souls; that sin and evil dispositions are *implanted* in the fœtus in the womb. Whereas, truly, our doctrine neither implies nor infers any such thing. In order to account for a sinful corruption of nature, yea a total native depravity of the heart of man, there is not the least need of supposing any *evil quality* infused, implanted, or wrought into the nature of man, by any *positive* cause or influence whatsoever, either from God, or from the creature; or of supposing that man is conceived and born with a *fountain of evil* in his heart, such as is anything properly *positive.* I think," he adds, "a little attention to the nature of things will be sufficient to satisfy any impartial considerate inquirer, that

the absence of positive good principles, and so, the *withholding* of a special divine influence to impart and maintain those good principles—leaving the common natural principles of self-love, natural appetite, etc. to themselves, without the government of superior divine principles—will certainly be followed by the corruption, yea, the total corruption of the heart, without any positive influence at all; and that it was thus, in fact, the corruption of nature came on Adam, immediately on his fall, and comes on all his posterity, as sinning in him, and falling with him."

This was enough of human authority for my defence, against all human challenge: and I thenceforward enjoyed my opinion with a free heart. Although, however, I occasionally met, in the course of reading, with what established my confidence, I had no conception, before seeing Dr. Payne's volume, that the principle had been maintained so decidedly and warmly, as the only tenable one, by so many of the most eminent theologians both of former and later times. To the names mentioned in the note, I add those of De Moulin, Howe, Bellamy, Russell (Dundee), Hodge (America: old school), Harris (Highbury), and Gilbert. My space does not permit giving extracts as I originally intended; and I must refer to the collection of them made by Dr. Payne.—With respect to this celebrated author himself, when I unite in all the commendations which have been pronounced on his intellectual vigour and moral honesty as a controversialist, and acknowledge that there are few, of recent times, by whom I have profited so much, I nevertheless regret that, in the present instance, he should have adopted Williams' argument, for the establishment of the principle of *privation.* It would require more space than I can command, to explain that argument to those who have not read his treatise; but those who have studied it will understand the bearing of

those two questions: First, Was it possible for Adam to have maintained his integrity in the *outfield* of Eden, supposing that he had not been transferred to Paradise, with the enjoyment of the alleged *chartered* blessings? And, Secondly, according to the argument, are not his offspring morally as well situated as he was in the *outfield*, before his transference into the *garden?* It appears to me, that both questions must have been answered by Dr. Payne in the affirmative—how fatally to his theory is obvious. In a communication to himself, I had stated these difficulties. He replied most courteously, and invited and promised correspondence. His sudden death deprived me of this advantage and honour. But I am persuaded we would not have come to an agreement; although he expressed the hope that we would, since there was so much in which we harmonized. According to my theory *that* was *constitutional* to Adam—constitutional in the sense indicated, which Dr. Payne represents as having been merely *chartered.* Adam in the *outfield,* if such outfield there was before his fall, was, according to my theory, possessed of *that* which, according to Dr. Payne's, he did not enjoy till transferred into Paradise. The difference is vital. But there is more in the Book a hundred-fold which causes me joy, than what causes me grief. It has disposed for ever of the dogma of an original impregnation of sin.

ARTICLE C, p. 109.

THE INDIVIDUALIZING OF THE GOSPEL CALL OR OFFER.

THE Marrow of Modern Divinity, by Edward Fisher, an educated gentleman, was first published at Oxford in the year 1646, and received the warm recommendation of several eminent members of the Westminster Assembly. When republished in Scotland, in the year 1717, with a recommendatory preface by the Rev. James Hog of Carnock, it produced a remarkable sensation. The ministry of the church had ebbed to the lowest point of declension, within the mark of apostacy; but the common people *read* the Word gladly. In the year 1720, the book was formally denounced from the Vatican of the Assembly, under the earnest protest of its most sanctified members. It is sufficient to mention the names of Boston and the two Erskines. They strenuously exerted themselves, but in vain, to have the obnoxious Act rescinded: and when at last the Secession was accomplished, our fathers pleaded the conduct of the Assembly in that matter as a principal reason which justified their separation. Who can doubt, that, had the author of the Fourfold State lived another year, he would have taken his place among the Separatists, yea, at their head: for he was the guiding spirit of the Marrow-men till his death? The education of the manse of Ettrick prepared his son for mounting a step still higher on the ladder of religious liberty, when he united his fortunes with those of Thomas Gillespie, in forming the junior section of Dissent from the Church of the State.

That morsel of "The *Marrow*," about which I am princi-

pally concerned at present, and which is at all times richest and sweetest and most nourishing to my mind is this:—

"*Evangelista.* Wherefore, my dear Neophytus, to turn my speech particularly to you, because I see you are in heaviness; I beseech you to be persuaded that here you are to work nothing, here you are to do nothing, here you are to render nothing to God, but only to receive the treasure which is Jesus Christ, and apprehend Him in your heart by Faith, although you be never so great a sinner. And so you shall obtain forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and eternal happiness; not as an agent, but as a patient, not by doing, but by receiving. Nothing here cometh betwixt, but faith only, apprehending Christ in the promise. This then is perfect righteousness—to hear nothing, to know nothing, to do nothing of the law of works; but only to know and believe that Jesus Christ is now gone to the Father, and sitteth at his right hand, not as a Judge; but is made *unto you* of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Wherefore, as Paul and Silas said to the jailor, so say I unto you, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved; that is, Be verily persuaded in your heart, that Jesus Christ *is yours*, and that you shall have life and salvation by Him; *that whatsoever Christ did for the redemption of* MANKIND *he did it for* YOU.

"*Neophytus.* But, Sir, hath such a one as I any warrant to believe in Christ?

"*Evangelista.* I beseech you to consider, that God the Father, as He is in his Son Jesus Christ, moved with nothing but with his free love to mankind lost, hath made a "Deed of Gift and Grant" unto them *all*, that, *whosoever* of them all shall believe in this his Son shall not perish, but have eternal life. And hence it was, that Jesus Christ himself said unto his disciples, Mark xvi. 15, Go and preach the

Gospel unto *every creature* under heaven: that is, Go and tell *every man* without exception, that here is good news for *him*, Christ is dead for *him;* and if he will take Him, and accept of his righteousness, he shall have Him. Therefore, saith a godly writer, Forasmuch as the Holy Scripture speaketh to *all* in general, none of us ought to distrust *himself;* but believe that it doth belong *particularly to himself.*"

Such was the doctrine for which Boston pleaded, and for which our Secession Fathers contended unto the martyrdom of the loss of their livings, at the first and great Exemplar Disruption of the Church of Scotland.—When I had no anticipation of the preceding treatise extending itself to such a length, I designed to extract largely from their writings the arguments and illustrations by which they maintained their Gospel plea. But as it is, I must refer to the admirable epitomé of the history of the controversy, in the volume of the Rev. Andrew Robertson.—For the same reason, I must withhold passages of genuine "marrow" in respect of the *individuality* of the call, which I had noted for insertion, from the works of Bunyan, Payne, Chalmers, etc. Beside what occurs so abundantly throughout the writings of the last-mentioned author, I would direct attention to an interesting account of a visit to his class-room, communicated to the Editor of the Evangelical Magazine: October, 1847.

ARTICLE D, p. 146.

THE INDWELLING OF THE SPIRIT.

Strictures on the Opinions of Dr. Whately and Dr. Jenkyn.

THE following remarks originally formed part of the general discussion; but, for the reason stated at page 146, they were separated and reserved for this place.

In proceeding to consider the Indwelling of the Spirit, we are met in the first instance by such a qualification, at least, of the doctrine, if it do not amount to a complete denial of it, as occurs in the following note of Archbishop Whately, in his treatise on the Errors of Romanism.

"It is strange and it is unfortunate, that so many should not only have overlooked the application of the term Temple by the apostles invariably to Christians *collectively*, never to the *individual* Christians; but should even have asserted the contrary on the strength of one text (1 Cor. vi. 19), which, according to all fair rules of interpretation, exhibits (especially in the original Greek) the same sense as the rest of the passages where the word occurs" (p. 73).

This note though *strange*—peculiarly strange for such a master in the logical art, can scarcely be said to be *unfortunate;* for the strangeness prevents its being mischievous.—Mark, first, how the *invariably* is a mere begging of the question. Though there had been twenty cases in which the term is indubitably applied to the church, or Christians collectively, this would not have proved, that in Corinthians vi. 19 it is not applied to each Christian individually.—Mark, secondly, the scantiness and inaccuracy of the induction. If we except

the apocalyptic passages, of such doubtful interpretation, there appear to be only five instances in the New Testament in which the image of a Temple is used for illustrating the state or character of the saints in any capacity whatever.* Of these, I admit without a grudge (for I delight in the representation), that 1 Cor. iii. 16, and Ephes. ii. 21 refer to Christians collectively. But when 1 Peter ii. 5 is in one part evidence for the propriety of the *collective* idea, it is in another as clearly evidence for the *individual:* for every "lively stone" has life by itself, and must, therefore, be individually inhabited.—The same is the case with 2 Cor. vi. 16. The individuality of the precept "be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," requires that the general idea of the temple be resolved into that of a number of smaller ones of which it is composed.—Now, is such an induction, consisting of these four passages, sufficient for the establishment of a principle, according to which the one that remains at 1 Cor. vi. 19, must necessarily be understood of Christians collectively? Instead of "all fair rules of interpretation" requiring this, I maintain that every fair rule, and every dictate of common sense besides, requires directly the opposite. Look at the passage either by itself, or in its connexion: "Flee fornication:—he that committeth fornication sinneth against his *own body.* What? Know ye not that your *body* is the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you.—Therefore, glorify God in your *body.*" Could any form of expression be more *individual?* And let those who are less learned be assured that the aspect of the passage is not a whit different in the original from what it is in the translation; or,

* 1 Tim. iii. 15, and Heb. x. 21, are regarded by some as other two instances besides those enumerated in the text. But Schleusner with propriety, ranks them with those passages which contain the idea of the *family* or *household* of God.

if there be any difference, that it is in favour of the *individual* view. If the Bishop mean, that the Greek word conveys more determinately the idea of a "corporation," the insinuation is most unwarranted. According to the idiom of our own language, the term "body" is used even more frequently than the corresponding term of the original, in the collective sense; so that if it would appear preposterous to use it in that sense, on the present occasion, in the English, it would appear even more preposterous to do so in the Greek. Try then how it will look in the English with the proposed amendment: for "body" read "corporation," either in one case or all the cases of its occurrence in the above quotation. I may not transcribe the improved version, such a burlesque does it make of the Scripture.

But although it were clear, that, in every instance of its use in the New Testament, the term is applied only to Christians collectively, wherein would it be "strange," that some should extend the idea to the saints individually? On the contrary, the inference would be most logical, that, if all united formed a temple in which the Spirit dwelt, then would each individual be inhabited. Yea, without the individual, it is impossible to construct the collective idea. The true conception of the Christian temple-work is, first, that each Individual as a "lively stone" is a temple of himself; then, that a number of these individuals form a Congregational temple; then, that a number of congregations form a Denominational temple; then, that the various denominations of a country, viewed in connexion, form a National temple; and finally, that all national churches, viewed in connexion form the World's temple of the Catholic Church—magnificent and beautiful, "the joy of the whole earth."—Once more I ask, Though the notion were not strictly scriptural, wherein would it have been "unfortunate"

to represent the saints as being individually inhabited of the Spirit? Is the Bishop's fear that it may cherish fanaticism? Well, suppose, that *that* is to be found among Christians collectively, which does not exist in them individually, is there less fear of this "corporation" presuming on its inspired infallibility? And who or what is the Bishop's "corporation" that enjoys the prerogative? After all he has done so praiseworthily in the exposure of priestly usurpation, can it be the "corporation" of the clergy, for whom he claims the attribute of being at least the shrine—the holy of holies of this temple? Could there possibly be a more "unfortunate" allocation?

We have found Bishop Whately's censure rather "fortunate" than otherwise, since it has furnished an opportunity of making a more pointed illustration of the truth: but an assault has been made from another quarter, which, when it is exceedingly "strange" is also lamentably "unfortunate," on account of the power for evil which lies in the assailant's character, talents, connection, and position. I need not blush in acknowledging that there is much in Dr. Jenkyn's speculations* which I do not comprehend, for I have many companions in the incompetency. But we are all grieved, that this, at least, should be so unmistakeably plain, that he treats with scorn, the popular doctrine of the Personal Indwelling of the Spirit in the saints, either in their individual or collective capacity. He censures the notion as being inconsistent at once with the indivisibility of the divine essence, which cannot he says, on that account inhabit a number of different individuals at the same moment; and with the universal diffusion of the divine essence, which cannot on that account ever find an empty spot, even

* The Union of the Holy Spirit and the Church. 2d Ed.

the heart of the most wicked of men, which it may visit and occupy anew.

That such objections as these should be urged by the mind which has conceived certain passages, rarely equalled either in literature or theology, which occur in that book, is another humiliating evidence of the weakness which characterises and makes a mockery of all human strength, even in its most favourable displays of power.—On the first principle, he might as well censure as superstitious, and derogatory from the divine glory, the conduct of two Christians at prayer acknowledging the presence of an entire Deity at the same moment, in their separate chambers.—And with respect to the second objection—what divine, I ask, ever taught, or private Christian believed, respecting the special presence of the Spirit differently from what he himself has so well expressed, and which he admits is often vouchsafed, when he observes "that 'the divine presence' designates a local manifestation of his agency in which He peculiarly and evidently exercises his influence and energy:" or, again, "that when God is said to be present in any place, the expression only means that *there* He makes a local manifestation of his agency, and presents a visible [or sensible] and marked exercise of his power?" (pp. 26 and 72.)—Without such a *manifestation* there is, so to speak, a latency of the Deity—a want of perception or feeling of his presence; and it is impossible to speak of the manifestation without using such language as that of his "coming," and "visiting," and "taking up his abode with us." One might as well attempt to avoid speaking of the sun as "rising" and "going down," because such language is not philosophically accurate.

Those who have not read his book, and some who have, will now ask, if, when this eminent divine so "strangely"

mocks at the popular doctrine, we can give any explanation of the manner in which he interprets the Scripture testimony on the subject of the Indwelling of the Spirit; for although we have already seen that he admits of a manifestation of divine presence, something much more explicit is requisite. Here, then, are his own words: "the constant and permanent presence of the Holy Spirit is in the Word of Truth. It is in the Christian and in the church only as the Word, the fixed shrine of the Holy Spirit, is possessed and held by them." (p. 85)—This is certainly very remarkable language for one who censures others so severely for their superstitious views; and, on reading it for the first time, one cannot help feeling as if he somewhat profanely attributed to the leathern cased volume that indwelling of the Spirit which he denies to the soul of a saint. But as he proceeds with his explanation, the mystery disappears, and resolves itself into a matter exceedingly simple indeed: I have already employed the *Principia* extensively for illustration. Well, call the Principia the shrine of Sir Isaac Newton's mind, that is, the depository of his principles, views, opinions, etc., and you have a clear illustration, thus far of Dr. Jenkyn's theory. And just as these views, etc., which Sir Isaac has lodged in the Principia, are his *philosophical influences;* so far are the views, etc., which the Spirit has lodged in the Word his *religious influences.* And further, just as when any one has adopted the views of the Principia, the mind of Sir Isaac may be said to be within him; so, should he adopt the views of the Word also, the Holy Spirit will be within him—dwelling in him, and actuating him.

Can this possibly be all, some will ask, which an evangelical divine, of high repute in his denomination, professes and teaches on the subject of the work of the Holy Spirit? Some who have read his book only partially or undiscri-

minatingly, have thought and affirmed that it is. But the accusation is unfair. He explicitly admits, that, in the work of conversion, there is a presiding action of the Spirit in *applying* or *administering* the *influences* which reside in the Word. Having employed the writings of Aristotle for illustration, somewhat in the same manner that the Principia of Newton have been employed in these pages,* when he compares the revival of philosophy in the dark ages with the revival of religion at Pentecost, he expresses himself as follows:—"In the revival of philosophy the spirit of Aristotle did not exercise any spontaneous desire and personal will:" whereas, in the religious revival, "unlike the finite and limited spirit of Aristotle, the ever-living and ever-present Spirit of Christ was in conscious activity, affecting intentionally, and influencing thinkingly, the minds and hearts of men" (pp. 97 and 98). And again, having instanced the case of a mother influenced by the letter of her son, he makes this distinction:—"in the change effected in the mother the spirit of her son is not consciously present, and spontaneously acting in the influences of this letter:" whereas, "in the conversion of a sinner, the Holy Spirit is consciously present in the influences of the Word, and exercising by them a spontaneous activity and personal volition." (p. 110.) Can anything more explicit be desired?

Having thus vindicated Dr. Jenkyn from the charge or suspicion of having departed from Catholic verity—a vindication which has been undertaken rather with the view of shewing that our side is still in possession of his valuable name, than in any chivalrous spirit of candour—I now turn to complain of him, just the more bitterly, that he should have so gratuitously disturbed and offended the minds of

* The author had so employed them in public discourse years before the publication of Dr. Jenkyn's book.

many by the appearance of an assault on the truth. What is it, I ask, which Protestant divines and preachers, of any account, believe on this subject, which he also does not profess; and what does he profess which they also do not believe? when yet, with a kind of perverse ingenuity, he has contrived to write his book in such a manner as to produce an impression, on the first reading of it, that *he* differs from every one else, and that no one else agrees with *him*. With much indignation he challenges the propriety of the current phraseology respecting the personal Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; and yet teaches, not only, in substance, what others teach on the question, but in language as express as theirs. If these words "the ever-living and ever-present Spirit of Christ was in conscious activity affecting intentionally, and influencing thinkingly the minds of men," do not describe a Personal Indwelling, then some of us had need return to school to learn the elements of the English language.—Again, when he inculcates with such earnestness, that the truths of the Word are the actuating principles which, being lodged in the mind, effect its regeneration and sanctification, who, except some Popish or Puseyite priest, teaches otherwise? And yet his protest lies against us all as ignorant or neglectful of the principle. It is true the same mode of expression is not common among us when he represents the Bible as being "the shrine of the Holy Ghost," and speaks of its truths under the name of the "influences of the Spirit;" but we all regularly teach what he means, and we think not less intelligibly and correctly. According to him, the heart in believing receives the *shrine* of the Holy Ghost; we of the antiquated school believe that it becomes the shrine itself.—Finally, when "our divines" are so sarcastically and indignantly denounced for speaking of the Word being of *itself* "a mere dead letter," what else do

they mean, than what he himself represents it to be, *inoperative*—as good, or rather, as bad, as dead, unless it be properly applied? When he resembles it to a magnet, with the influence constantly residing in it, he, nevertheless, admits that, like other magnets, it must receive proper conditions in order to operate; and that it is the presiding power of "the ever-living, ever-present Spirit of Christ in conscious activity" which gives it these conditions.—I cut short these remarks, grieved that for the truth's sake I should have been obliged to say so much in censure of one, in many respects, of the best spirits of the age; albeit as *inconsequential* in his logic as any I know.

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